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FIFTEEN YEARS

IN THE

CHAPEL OF YALE COLLEGE

BY

NOAH PORTER

1871-1886

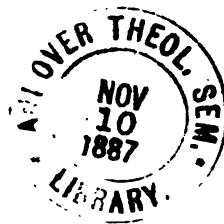
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## PREFACE.

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THE discourses in this volume were prepared for definite academic uses, and written in a distinctively academic spirit. Fifteen of them were delivered as Baccalaureate sermons before the classes which were graduated during the presidency of the writer. The remaining three have some historic interest. While their themes are practical, the treatment of them is more or less philosophical. If some of them may seem to be positive and polemical in their tone, it will be remembered that the occasions for writing them were held by the writer to be real and serious, and the truths which they set forth were believed to be timely and important. Should any one of his old pupils chance to open this volume, he may recognize the expression of thoughts which he heard many years ago, — perhaps with little heed, — but to which the experiences of his subsequent life have given their serious attestation. Whether this shall be, or not, he cannot be mistaken, if, in these utterances of positive conviction, he shall think he still hears the expression of affectionate regard from his old teacher and faithful friend,

N. P.

YALE COLLEGE, June, 1887.



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**FIFTEEN YEARS IN YALE CHAPEL.**





## I.

### ON LEAVING THE OLD CHAPEL.\*

"WE HAVE THOUGHT OF THY LOVING-KINDNESS, O GOD, IN THE MIDS-  
OF THY TEMPLE." — *Psalms xlviii. 9.*

It was on the 17th of November, 1824, that this edifice was set apart as a place of public worship. On this occasion a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Fitch, professor of divinity, from 2 Chron. vi. 18. The chapel older than this was begun in 1761, and dedicated in June, 1763, by a sermon from Professor Daggett. Towards evening on the day of dedication, "two English orations were delivered by two of the pupils belonging to the college." Previously to this time, daily worship had been observed in the College Hall from 1718, when the first college edifice was completed; while on Sundays the students attended at the First Church. This original chapel, now called the Athenæum, had become too narrow for the accommodation of the students and officers. That edifice will always be memorable as the scene of the pulpit labors of President Dwight. Its third story had from an early date been set apart for the uses of the department of natural philosophy, and was divided into three apartments, — the Philosophical Chamber in the rear, and two rooms for apparatus in front. On being abandoned as a chapel, the most of the second story was used for many years

\* June 18, 1876.

for the libraries of the Linonian and Brothers' Societies, and subsequently for recitation-rooms, and still later nearly the whole of the building was given up to this use. In the summer of 1830, the spire which surmounted the tower was taken down, to make room for an observatory which was required for the new refracting telescope, then one of the most famous in the country. The cost of this second chapel was some ten to twelve thousand dollars, about one-fourth of which was contributed by the friends of the college. The edifice itself has undergone no material alterations since it was erected. The attic, it will be remembered, was originally handsomely fitted for the reception of the college library, which had been previously kept in that portion of the third story of the Lyceum which is now divided into two recitation-rooms. This room was for several years known as the Rhetorical Chamber after the library had been removed to this edifice. The third story of this building was fitted, as now, for studies and lodging-rooms, and from the first was chiefly occupied by students in theology till 1838, when the Divinity College was erected, which was removed in 1870. The gallery was furnished with square pews along the walls of the house, with a broad passage between them and the gallery front, in which one or two rows of movable seats were placed, for casual attendants and professional or graduate students. The pulpit was so arranged that the speaker stood three feet higher than at present. The present arrangement of seats in the gallery was made in the year 1831; and in 1847, the year after the accession of President Woolsey, the seats below were somewhat improved, the central and higher portion of the pulpit was cut down, and the preacher brought into somewhat nearer communication with his hearers. Four years ago the pulpit itself was again

lowered, and the gallery fronts were cut down. In the year 1851 the present organ was purchased, and the instrumental accompaniments to the singing which had been previously used were dispensed with.

It is a little more than fifty years since this edifice was finished. The college at that time had four professors in the academical department, besides the professor of divinity. The academical department numbered three hundred and forty-nine students. The medical department had existed from the year 1813, and in 1824 had eighty students. The Theological Seminary had been formally organized as a distinct department the year previous, and had seventeen students. The Law School was not recognized as a branch of Yale College until a year or two later. The humble foundations of the Scientific School were laid in 1846. The School of Fine Arts was founded in 1864. The department of philosophy and the arts was organized in 1847, although resident graduates had received instruction here from the earliest days of the college.

The pecuniary resources of the college were very limited. In 1831 the entire net income of the academical department from funds and real estate was \$2,363<sup>62</sup>/<sub>100</sub>. The whole cost of instruction in the academical department in 1833 was \$12,881. In 1875 it was \$57,867. Besides the large endowments and gifts for buildings that have been made by individuals, three several efforts to add to the general fund have been made since 1824. The first, in 1831, resulted in \$100,000, of which \$94,000 accrued to the academical department; the second, in 1854, yielded \$110,000, \$90,000 of which went to the same department; and the third, in 1871, which is not yet finished, has already produced more than \$150,000.

The instruction of the college was conducted chiefly

by tutors, each of whom taught his division in every branch of study except those taught by lectures, and continued with the same division during his official term. He became in this way the guardian and counsellor of many of his pupils. The instruction of the professors was chiefly by lectures. Though few in number, the professors were enterprising and able scholars, standing foremost in their several departments, and were united to one another by a chivalrous courtesy which was worthy of the elder times, and which, with their single-hearted devotion to the college, gave them a high place in the confidence of the community. They were all men of decided religious convictions, though singularly unlike in the expression of them.

I have no disposition nor temptation to depreciate the scholarship of the present day, and should be the last to desire to go back to the scanty helps and the uncritical methods of fifty years ago; but the inspiring power, the resources and the individuality of the instructors and pupils of those days would not suffer by comparison with the products of these times. Life was more sober then to those who reflected at all. Scholars were more cautious, circumspect, solid, and docile, than they are at present, and the whole tone of intellectual life was less pretentious and sensational. There was more independence and individuality and personal enthusiasm in teachers and pupils then than now. Ideas were diffused more slowly, and received more cautiously, for the reason that newspapers and reviews, and railways and steamships and telegraphs, furnished none of the abundant facilities of these times for the rapid diffusion of thought and feeling. In literature, books were less abundant, and in many departments immeasurably inferior to those which are now everywhere at hand. But neither the men nor the times were worthy the

flippant contempt with which some learned scholars and many shallow sciolists are disposed to judge the American scholars and teachers of the preceding generation.

At the time when this chapel was erected, morning prayers were held at five in the summer term, and at six and six and a half in the autumn and winter. Morning recitations were uniformly attended before breakfast by all the classes except the senior, and after 1846 by the senior class also. Evening prayers were held at five and six o'clock, according to the season. The President officiated at morning prayers, and one of the professors or tutors in the evening. On Sunday evenings, in addition to the two services of Sunday worship, a printed sermon was read by some member of the senior class till the year 1828. In the year 1858 or 1859 morning prayers and recitations before breakfast, and evening prayers, were abandoned; and in the year 1872 the afternoon Sunday service was disused.

When this chapel was opened, the late Dr. Eleazer Thompson Fitch had been for seven years the professor of divinity, and pastor of the church. He was distinguished for the acuteness and subtilty of his theological discourses, and the persuasive eloquence of his popular sermons. No one who ever heard the pathetic tones of his entreaties, or the elaborate exhaustiveness of his subtile arguments, could forget the man; and no one who knew him as a man would desire to lose him from his memory. He may be said to have attained the zenith of his reputation and his influence some ten or twelve years afterward, although his characteristic power never left him. In 1852 he was led by bodily infirmity to resign the active exercise of his pastorate. In the year 1854 Rev. George Park Fisher was elected as his successor; and he filled the office for seven years, when he was transferred to the professorship in the Theological

Seminary, which he now occupies. In 1863 the Rev. William B. Clarke was chosen pastor, and served three years, resigning in 1866. In 1867 Rev. Oliver Ellsworth Daggett, D.D., was elected, and resigned in 1870. During the intervals the pulpit has been supplied by the occasional services of clergymen connected with the college, and others.

We turn from these external facts and events to the theological and religious life of the institution during this period of fifty years. I begin with the *relations of the chapel to Christian theology*. The pulpit in Yale College has always had a positive theological character. The college preacher has from the first been styled the professor of divinity. President Clap took no negative position with respect to the controversies which agitated Connecticut and the other colonies in respect to the then new and old theologies. Professors Daggett and Wales were both of them able and discriminating theologians of the type of their day, and were soundly Calvinistic, of the school of Edwards. President Stiles would have been called a Broad Churchman had he lived in these days, or a moderate Calvinist with very catholic sympathies. President Dwight prepared his system of theology in the form of sermons for the college chapel. These sermons, while theological in their substance, are popular in their form. They are remarkable for their freedom from scholastic terminology, and their successful use of an untheological diction. Dr. Dwight was one of the foremost men of his time for his interest in English literature, and was eminently successful in employing in the pulpit the language of common life, and also in examining the principles of theology in the light of common sense, and setting them forth in the forms of popular illustration and of common speech.



Though he called himself a disciple of Edwards, and in form held fast to one or two of his distinctive doctrines, as upon the will and moral inability, he was thoroughly averse to a dryly metaphysical manner, and could not endure the extreme conclusions which some of the Edwardian theologians of his time derived by logical inference from the doctrine of disinterested benevolence. He was for his time a good interpreter of the Scriptures. He welcomed and used the best commentaries which the times could furnish. He was a man of marked literary taste, and no little literary enterprise. He had a poet's sensibilities, and was master of an imposing eloquence. For all these reasons, his theology was immensely popular; and by its popularity it at once excited an interest in theology, and softened the asperities, and smoothed the differences, of narrow and extreme partisans. The services of Dr. Dwight in combating the infidelity of his times, have been generally recognized. The equally if not more important services which he rendered in introducing a more rational and scriptural theology, have not so often been acknowledged. Not long before his death, the new school of scriptural interpretation which had been growing up in Germany began to make itself felt in this country. The cardinal doctrines of this school were, that the Scriptures should be interpreted like any other ancient book, — by the rules of grammar and in the true historic sense, — and that theologians must abandon some of their proof texts, and test them all by these criteria. An active and earnest controversy in respect to the divinity of Christ sent the whole Christian community in New England and the whole country to the study of the New Testament with renewed interest, to learn what was its testimony concerning its Lord. At the same time, a new interest in every reli-

gious question was everywhere awakened, as the result of the revival of Christian feeling. Dr. Fitch fully sympathized with the newly awakened interest in theological discussion, and with the new methods. He was himself a subtile thinker, and a thorough student — with more than a dash of genius, and yet with many of the weaknesses of a recluse. He was also stimulated by the fire and force of such men as Lyman Beecher, Nathaniel William Taylor, and Professor Chauncey Allen Goodrich. Suddenly he became the hero of a theological controversy; and, before he knew it, this sensitive and retiring scholar found himself assailed as almost a heretic in respect to the doctrine of sin and other related doctrines. He defended himself manfully, and became more positive than ever. He bestowed unwearied pains upon the subtile argumentations of his morning discourses, which were uniformly upon some theological topic. Whether or not his auditors followed him in all the intricate mazes through which he sought to lead them, they respected him for his earnestness, and were always ready to arouse themselves to listen with breathless attention to the flights of eloquence with which he uniformly ended the dryest discussions. The spontaneous awakening to his animated perorations was often distinctly noticeable, but it never indicated disrespect. During those earliest years of earnest theological and religious life, the Theological Seminary was organized, and the upper story of this edifice became the headquarters of all its operations. Both Dr. Taylor and Professor Gibbs had their studies and their lecture-rooms upon that floor. The earnestness with which the so-called New-Haven theology was discussed in all parts of the country was in all these ways intimately connected with this chapel. It is no part of my design to explain the features nor to discuss the merits of this

controversy. The alarm and suspicion which it excited for years have now happily gone by. Good men still continue to differ in opinion as to the correctness of the doctrines which were taught with great earnestness by Drs. Fitch, Taylor, and Goodrich, and as earnestly combated by their critics. Some of these critics still insist that they could not be real and consistent Calvinists; but none ever doubted that they were zealous Christians, nor that they labored with intense energy to advance the kingdom of God. We record it as a simple matter of history, that for very nearly forty years this chapel was a place which attracted the attention of many minds, and the interest of many hearts, all over the country. The theology which was taught and defended here was not taught as a scholastic speculation, but as a living and energetic force, because it was believed to be the power of God unto salvation. It was preached with apostolic power. It was held or rejected as the very truth of God, or fatal error. There was an earnest and stirring life during all these years, — an almost fiery enthusiasm, — which made this chapel a memorable place to hundreds of the members and graduates of this college.

If I might be permitted to give a critical estimate of this theological movement, I should say it was simply a development of the independent but reverent spirit of theological reasoning which was begun by the elder Edwards, and popularized by President Dwight. Viewed in another aspect, it was an earnest attempt to introduce the ethical element into the defence and enforcement of the Christian system. The prominence which it gave to the foundation truths of natural theology, — as the freedom of the will, and the moral government of God, — is explained by the conviction that Christianity presupposes these truths, that it must be

interpreted in harmony with them, and that it can never be rejected by a man who intelligently and honestly holds them. The threatening aspects of modern unbelief bring daily and hourly confirmation that these views in respect to the real strength and import of the Christian evidences, and the nature of Christian theology, were eminently reasonable and just, and that they were not enforced too earnestly or too soon.

The transition is natural from the theological to the *religious life of the college*. During the first half of this half-century, the one was more or less closely connected with the other. It was not so readily believed then as now that a genuine Christian life could to a considerable degree be independent of a sound theological creed. It is the simple truth to say that the earnest theological discussions to which we have alluded were connected with an earnest religious activity and a fervent zeal for the conversion of men. It was true, not only of this college, but it was true of the whole country, that its extensive and pervasive revivals of religion from 1820 to 1840 or 1845 were connected with earnest theological discussions, and sometimes attended by zealous and even by bitter controversies. The most active agent in the religious life of the college was Professor Chauncey Goodrich, from 1817-1839 professor of Rhetoric, and from 1839-1860 professor of the Pastoral Charge. Though he rarely, if ever, preached in the College Chapel, he was eminently effective in familiar religious lectures, and in private conversation with individuals. He was master of an impassioned eloquence, which, though it might seem occasionally to rise above the level of ordinary religious emotion, was very impressive to many minds. Professor Goodrich supplied those services which Professor Fitch was physically incapable

of rendering, and till the day of his death was regarded as the chief reliance for his personal religious power. He was the adviser of many in times of spiritual need, and by his prompt and ready sympathy and his generous liberality proved himself a faithful servant of his Master. As Professor Goodrich was conspicuously active in all special seasons of religious interest, he left behind a carefully written record of their history in the college before the year 1837. From this narrative and other sources it appears, that, during the last fifty-two years, there have been fourteen occasions of marked religious interest which have resulted in very considerable accessions to the communion of the college church; viz., in 1825, 1827, 1831, 1832, 1835, 1837, 1840, 1841, 1843, 1846, 1849, 1857, 1858, and 1866. In several other years the additions to the church by profession of faith have been also worthy of notice. The most remarkable of these occasions were in the years 1821, 1831, and 1858, in each of which the entire college community was moved, and this edifice seemed indeed none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.

The most of these revivals have been in close sympathy with similar movements in the community. Now and then it has happened that a strong religious interest has been limited to the walls of the college, but usually the tone of religious feeling in this community has been in harmony with that which has prevailed in the larger community without. In 1831 the minds of men were moved by the logical yet earnest presentation of theological truth. In 1858, as in the community so in this college, a wave of emotion seemed to affect the hearts of men, on which multitudes were borne into the kingdom of God, by the uplifting force of praise and prayer. It is not to be denied that in this college,

as in other communities, these revivals have been attended with more or less of mere sympathetic and factitious excitement, and followed by some sad disappointments; but usually an intelligent and manly earnestness has been the rule in them all, and hundreds of noble men have received those impulses which have saved them from threatening moral ruin, and been the beginnings of a manly Christian life. Multitudes of students and their friends have reason to bless this old chapel as the birthplace of their noblest life, and not to them only, but indirectly to scores and hundreds besides themselves, even in distant parts of our own country, and in lands beyond the sea.

The ordinary religious life of the college is of greater significance perhaps than the occasional, although it may attract less notice. Much is said of the proverbial sluggishness of the Christian life in college-walls, and of the chilling influences of intellectual pursuits upon Christian piety. Many persons indulge in the habit of speaking and thinking of the religious life of the college as necessarily low, whenever it does not exhibit the fervor and zeal of a revival. The low morality and easy virtue of college students, especially in relation to college duties and college temptations, are fruitful themes for mournful lamentations and earnest appeals. It were wiser if the remedies were more actively sought for and more efficiently applied. It is the privilege and the duty of the citizen of the kingdom of God never to despair of this kingdom in the future. But whatever defects have characterized the past, we have reason to be grateful that it is bright with many examples of Christian duty and honor. Every class during all these fifty years has had scores of faithful men and true, who have abhorred lying, and resisted sensuality, who have in a good degree walked humbly before God, and up-

rightly before men. Every class has had its striking examples of all human goodness, the thought of whom has been potent with their classmates all their lives afterwards to drive out every evil suggestion, and strengthen every good purpose. During all these fifty years, in every morning prayer and Sunday service, some hearts have offered spiritual worship, and responded with faith and love to the uttered words of truth. Many profane men have learned some semblance of religious reverence, or at least of religious decorum. Many lewd and intemperate men have been convinced of the rottenness and dishonor of sin. Much is said, and much might be said with truth, of the temptations and dangers of college life. More might be said than often is said of the solid and unobtrusive goodness of the majority of those who hold fast to their integrity from the first, or bring out of the occasionally pliant gristle of youth a strong and well-knit Christian manhood. This old chapel has gathered within its walls many noble, aspiring souls, whose lives have not dishonored the prayers which it has taught them to repeat, and the words of counsel which it has caused them to hear. Wherever they are this day, they would send back their blessing to this place, did they but know that this is the last season of our Sunday worship here. Wherever they are, we send them our blessing from this never-to-be forgotten altar and temple of our God.

The Christian sons of Yale are a great and glorious company of honored youth and honored men, whether they witnessed a good confession of their faith while here, or whether the good seed that was here sown in sermon and prayer and instructive discipline has brought forth its fruits in later years. Few, very few, have made a total shipwreck of their faith, or a dishonor of their lives. Many, very many, of those who gave

little heed to the prayers and preaching of the chapel when here, would now breathe upon us their earnest prayers, and stir us with their own moving admonitions, taught by the salutary experiences of their later life.

Since this chapel was opened, the great enterprises of *Christian benevolence and reform* have made a rapid growth, and attained gigantic proportions. In 1824 the leaven of the gospel was just beginning to work in heathen countries. Missionary enterprises were looked upon with distrust and contempt by the sagacious and worldly wise. But notwithstanding, the leaven did not cease to work; and there is now scarcely a nation in which its effects are not clearly discerned, and positively honored or feared. Fifty years ago, the possibility of animating old and effete religions with a new Christian life, and of displacing dead and corrupt systems by the simple gospel, was scarcely credited. Nowadays the missionary is respected by diplomats, and his position is recognized by the commanders of armies and fleets. Whether Christianity is the true religion or not, it is showing its power, and fulfilling its destiny, by eating out the life of the old religions. Not a few of the graduates of this college have given their hearts and hands to the missionary work. Many distinguished for scholarship, and noble in manly accomplishments, would this day, if they could, send their greetings to this house of prayer from the sanctuaries which they have reared on the islands of the sea, at the Golden Horn, and upon the slopes and heights of Lebanon; in India, China, and Japan. Not a few have sent to us their sons from afar to be trained under the influences by which their own zeal was inspired. A youth from China, sent hither by a Christian teacher, himself a graduate of this college since this chapel was built,



returned to his home to gain wealth and distinction, which he has learned nobly to use, by inducing his government to send bands of her sons under his guidance to this western or eastern region to be trained by the culture which Christianity alone inspires, and is himself soon to represent the Celestial Empire at the Capitol of the Great Republic. Should I repeat the roll of honored missionary brethren, who will, whether living or dead, never cease to remember this hallowed place, it would show a goodly company.

The services of this college through this chapel for the *kingdom of Christ in our own country* have been, if possible, still more conspicuous. Yale College, during all of the present century, has been pre-eminently a college for the whole nation. Its undergraduates at times have represented almost every State in the Union; and there is not a State now in the Union in which they are not to be numbered, in some by scores, in others by hundreds. Every man who has been trained in the ways of Christian order and discipline, has gone back to his home to be an example and a power for Christian uprightness. Every man who has gone forth to take part in founding or rearing one of our infant States, whether as teacher or editor or lawyer or judge or preacher, has been a missionary of Christian truth just so far as he has exemplified the principles and spirit which he here learned to believe in and to care for. Not a few have here been inspired and strengthened to go forth to assist in laying the foundations of many generations in the forest and prairie States, while as yet the prairies were unbroken, and the forests were unsubdued. Let one example suffice among many. In the years 1828 and 1829, seven members of the Theological Seminary here were associated as the Illinois Association to plant colleges and schools and churches

in that infant State. They soon were increased to twelve, most of them able men, who have fulfilled their vows with conspicuous fidelity and zeal. The formation of this missionary company was not only most timely in the critical condition of Illinois, but it stimulated to many similar enterprises. At that time Illinois had a few more than a hundred thousand inhabitants, the majority of whom sympathized with the Southern civilization. Before thirty-five years had elapsed, this State sent nearly two hundred and sixty thousand men into the field, to serve three years in the defence of Christian freedom, and of whom more than twenty-eight thousand laid down their lives, among them the head of the nation. And still the good work goes on. I cannot count the number of heads of colleges and schools, of professors and teachers, of Christian ministers and missionaries, of bishops and missionary superintendents, of Christian magistrates and laymen,—from the chief justice of the nation down to the unofficed citizen,—who have been conspicuous in the newer States in propagating those solid principles of Christian faith and duty which this college has taught or confirmed.

During these last fifty years enormous advances have been made in ethical, social, and political reform. The movements against intemperance, slavery, and for prison discipline; for sanitary precautions in houses and streets, in cities and villages; for the increase of the comforts and beauty of life,—need only be alluded to. Fifty years ago Europe and this country were just beginning to recover from the effects of the convulsions and protracted wars which followed the first French Revolution. Universal political re-action then set in. Almost the first sign in the opposite direction was furnished by

the Greek Revolution, which was supposed to be complete by the battle of Navarino in 1827, which was greeted by a general illumination of the college buildings, preceded by a chant of triumph from the college choir at evening prayers. The dethronement of Charles X. followed in 1830, and the accession of Louis Philippe with his Charter. Then came the second reaction and the second Revolution of 1848, and the accession of Napoleon III., after all the thrones of Europe had been convulsed with revolution. Then followed the Crimean war, which brought the Western powers into strange fellowship, and prepared the way for the union of the Italian States, and the ejection of Austria from their territory. Next the advance of Prussia upon Austria, the triumph at Sadowa after a seven weeks' war, and the creation of a united Germany, — the beginnings of the first Protestant empire on the continent. Next the invasion of Germany by France, the defeat at Sedan, and the surrender of the French Emperor. I cannot trace the progress of liberal ideas in England, and the immense improvement in the purity and force of religious convictions, and the refinement of public and private manners, during the reign of Victoria, — whose reign cannot fail to be remembered in the history of man, as a reign which Christ has signally blessed and honored, and in which the whole Christian world has rejoiced. During these fifty years England herself has planted the seeds of new Christian empires in the Southern seas, which are now illustrating and diffusing the blessings of Christian civilization more rapidly than the world can follow their progress. During these same fifty years, steam navigation upon the ocean, railway travelling by land, telegraphic communication in the air and under the sea, photographic painting by the sun, have made the world another place to

live in than when this chapel was opened, — a fairy-land to dream of, had its now commonplace realities been prophesied in the sermon of dedication. Our own nation has been convulsed by a war of ideas, and saved by the voluntary sacrifice of the lives of half a million of men, and the martyrdom of a man whom the world learned to honor almost as inspired of God, and over the story of whose death it has scarcely yet ceased to weep. And now, as we leave this chapel, this nation celebrates the centennial year of its life, still safe, though sorely chastened by the providence of God, with its population and wealth increased beyond the dreams of half a century ago.

These changes and this progress are chiefly interesting to us as they are related to the kingdom of God. So far as they are the causes or effects of Christian civilization, they are the blossoms and fruits of the tree of life. But amid all these apparent triumphs of the kingdom of God in missionary progress and enterprise, and in Christian reform and Christian culture, it is more than hinted that the energy of Christian faith is everywhere becoming relaxed, that science is sapping its foundations, and criticism is disintegrating its structure, and that this change is nowhere so sensibly felt as in the higher institutions of learning. The most interesting question which we can ask this day is, whether this is so. Is faith fleeing before the advance of science? are Christian prayer and Christian consolation and Christian immortality vanishing into smoke at the touch of modern criticism?

That science has made extraordinary advances in the last fifty years, all of us know. Many of the sciences of nature, which fifty years since were in feeble infancy, have grown into vigorous manhood. Not a few of

these sciences have discerned new facts, established new laws, and evolved new methods, so far as almost to have parted with their identity. But not one nor all together have made nature less dependent on creative thought and goodness. Not one nor all together have made atheism intellectually more attractive, or the denial of providence more rational, or the rejection of prayer more satisfactory. That science has become more theological by discussing these deep-lying, wide-reaching questions, proves simply that the scientist is enlarging his horizon. We may pardon him if he reasons very badly upon these subjects, if he will condescend to reason upon them at all. It is, perhaps, better that a man should be an atheist in theology than never to ask whether there is a God; better to deny prayer and providence, than sneeringly to despise the questions which pertain to both. It is a matter of congratulation that scientists of every school now seek after God, if haply they may find him. That some philosophers should doubt, and others should deny, need not disturb us so long as many believe and worship, and those who do neither cannot be content to leave these questions alone.

But how is it with history and literature and criticism? Are not these abandoning the supernatural Christ? Just so far as they are abandoning the living God, but no farther. The man who denies creation *must* reject miracles. The man who sees only force and necessity in history, must reject a loving providence. He who turns his back upon the living God as manifest in his works, has no place in his head, because he has no room in his heart, for God manifest in the flesh. The man who believes that the soul is but atoms in motion, must sneer at the love, whether human or divine, that is stronger than death. He cannot escape the logic of

his own theories, and he ought not to try. But let him not assume to dogmatize for others, who, holding different premises, follow a logic as rigid as his own, to nobler and more inspiring conclusions. Let him not set up the spirit of a literary clique for the *time-spirit* of a generation. Let him remember that Voltaire and Rousseau, the one a critic and the other a sentimentalist, were each as confident that he represented a spirit that should rule every coming generation. *That time-spirit* ruined the generation which it sought to rule, and the next generation shrank from it with abhorrence.

If we turn in another direction, we find that the faith of multitudes of cultured men in the Christian spirit and the Christian life was never so profound and so distinctly professed as at present. The consciences of multitudes who are asking one another, without being able to answer, What think ye of Christ? do yet declare with a pathetic earnestness never known before, *Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*. The Christian type of courtesy and self-sacrifice is more and more generally accepted as the ideal of human excellence and the law of human duty. It is not too much to hope that many of those who are ready to believe in Christ only as a power, will very soon be ready to believe in Christ as a person, and the ethical and religious culture which has been inspired in the school which Christ has founded and nurtured, shall turn back, with tearful penitence and a loving heart, to render to the Master the love and homage which are his by right.

If there be a few who dream that *Christ as a person* must soon cease to be honored, even in Christian temples, there are those who know that *Christ as a power* never wrought with such energy or so demonstrated his supremacy as at this moment, among all the shrines

of idolatry and superstition. Meanwhile the Living Church, which contains many scholars and philosophers of foremost eminence and authority, holds fast to its faith that the power of Christ to subdue all things to himself lies in Christ's personality as the manifested Father and the glorified Son of man.

It is for the Church of Christ to ask itself whether it is not largely responsible for this modern unbelief; whether its sectarian strifes, its narrow dogmatism, its exclusive pretensions, its suspicion of culture, its spectacular shows; whether its cant, its formalism, its selfishness, its denunciation of science, and its manifold uncharities,—have not largely contributed to this cultured rejection of the supernatural Christ and the scientific denial of God.

It is for the Christian colleges, and the men whom they train, to consider and decide whether they shall not lead the way to profounder views of Christian science, and wider conceptions of Christian culture, and freer views of Christian fellowship. If there is to be a church of the future, such as there must and will be if Christ is to achieve his destined triumphs, a church free from sectarian strifes and narrow dogmatisms, in which the Scriptures shall be interpreted by the advancing science and the developed culture that are to be; in which zeal shall be refined by knowledge, and knowledge shall kindle zeal,—then Christian seats of learning must be foremost in preparing the way of the Lord.

We rejoice to bear testimony as we leave this pulpit, that whatever have been its defects, it has been charitable and free in its treatment of Christian truth. The confession of faith which was introduced by Dr. Dwight is eminently simple and catholic. The preachers who have here defended the faith, whatever have been their

defects, have sought by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. No sectarian or proselyting spirit has ever been countenanced in these walls. But Christ has been set forth as the example of the Christian's life, the ground of the Christian's hope, the strength of the Christian's weakness, the comfort of the Christian's sorrow, and the triumph of the Christian's death.

And now, as I remember that we meet for the last time as a Christian congregation in this house of worship, I cannot but think of the many noble souls who have here preached and heard and prayed together, many of whom worship in the house of God not made with hands. Little did I think when I entered this chapel for the first time, timid beyond the timidity of youth, and awed by the stately presence of the venerable Day, that I should be called to follow him in his duties, and to speak the last words in this house in his honor, to this honored assembly. Nor again when in riper years I began to rejoice in the friendship of his loved successor, that I should perform this parting service which were more fitly discharged by him. Nor when I was moved by the persuasive eloquence of Fitch, that it should be my lot to bless his memory for the last time, in what was so long his pulpit. Nor, as I have seen class after class go forth in the glowing promise of Christian youth to fulfil that promise in Christian manhood, that it should be my office, in the name of the multitudes of the dead and the living, to pronounce their final blessings upon this place.

In the name of this goodly company, gathered with us in spirit from the ends of the earth, and looking down upon us from the heights above, do we bless this place for all the good that it has witnessed and achieved, and for all the precious memories that gather about its



varied history. As we go forth, bearing with us the trusts which are committed to our care, into the more attractive edifice which is provided for our use, may our prayers be answered that "*the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.*"

## II.

### *ON ENTERING THE NEW CHAPEL.\**

"EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE."—*John xlii. 37.*

WE are assembled to consecrate this edifice as a house of prayer, and with befitting services of praise and worship to set it apart to the religious uses of this college. The occasion seems not only to justify, but to require, that we should consider the need and the uses of a college chapel. This is the more necessary and suitable, because the necessity of any special provision for Christian worship and instruction in a college community has of late been frequently questioned, and the practicability of harmonizing positive religious influences with the appropriate aims and activities of a great university has been openly denied. Upon these and kindred points I propose to speak with entire freedom—not disguising from myself, nor hiding from you, the existence and the grounds of opposing opinions, but urging the counter considerations with whatever reason and force they may properly command.

I must assume that the obligations of religion are supreme—that its importance is transcendent, that Christianity is a supernatural religion, that to Christ belongs supreme authority in heaven and earth, and that the goings on of nature and the events of human history, including the developments of science and let-

\* *June 18, 1876.*

ters, of culture and art, are all in the interest of Christ's kingdom. Those who deny or question any of these truths can scarcely find any common ground with those who receive them, upon which to discuss the question whether a Christian church should be provided for a Christian college. Those with whom the questions of Theism and Responsibility and Immortality and Christianity are open questions, may reasonably contend that the positive recognition or enforcement of these truths should find no place in an institution, which, in their view, should be devoted exclusively to literature and science. With such men we can have no arguments at the present time, but only with those who profess to believe in God and duty, in immortality and in Christ.

I would also premise that a college is a community by itself, having a separate and peculiar common life. Its members must to a large extent be shut up to the society of one another. The peculiar occupations of teachers and pupils, the warm and generous sympathies of the younger, and the retired habits of the older, tend to make this society isolated and exclusive.

Such a college is clearly distinguished from a university, and also from any school of special or advanced studies in which the students by reason of greater age, or of their nearer connection with the active life of the community, are supposed to be less closely organized by the bonds of common intellectual and moral sympathies. With this as my starting-point I proceed to observe, —

1. The members of a college — instructors and pupils — are men, and as such are subject to religious responsibilities, and require religious inspirations. Whether Christianity be regarded as the flower of developed humanity, or as the necessary agency for human redemption, those devoted to intellectual pursuits, as

learners and teachers, need to recognize and feel its power as truly as other men. Every member of a college has a conscience which commands to duty, and forbids from sin. Every one lives a life of loving and obedient fellowship with the Father of spirits, or a life without God in the world. Every one is a loyal disciple of Christ, or an unbelieving and disloyal hearer of his claims. They are all exposed to the same sorrows and the same disappointments as other men, and need the same comforts and strength. Intellectual activities and achievements are no substitutes for those which are moral and spiritual. At best they can only hide from the soul its weakness and its sin, and thus cut it off more effectually from the fountain of strength and healing; but, so far as they do this, they are no blessing, but only a more dangerous curse.

It is only by a foolish conceit, that men of science and culture dream that they are specially exempt from those responsibilities to God which hold other men to a religious life. It is only a hollow inflation that lifts them above the obligations to religious reverence and worship. It were well that they should be reminded, that, however sagaciously they may interpret the universe, they did not originate its forces, and cannot reverse its laws; that however wisely they may read the lessons of history, or predict the events that are to come, they owe many duties to the present generation; that their individual lives are short, and their future well-being depends on the use they make of the days and weeks which are in their hands. However flatteringly they say to one another in their circles of mutual admiration, "Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High," the voice of truth sternly replies, "Ye shall all of you die like men, and fall like one of the princes."

It is well that instructors and pupils should come to a common place of prayer to hear and respond to these lessons of truth as they together lift their hearts to God in worship. It is well that there should be one place in which they may meet together upon the same level, and may be reminded that they are men, by their common relations to God and duty and the immortal life. Moreover, whatever tends to make them better men, will make them better teachers and better students. Students will be none the worse, but much the better, for those positive and elevating influences which impel them to be truth-telling and honest, to be magnanimous and frank, to be upright and downright in their dealings and demeanor with their fellows and their teachers. They will be none the worse, but much the better, to be reminded by the highest of all sanctions, that the moral law is not relaxed because they are disposed to forget it. It will do no harm, and may do good, that college morality and college piety should be frequently brought into the sanctuary of God for the re-adjustment of the standards of the one and the re-kindling of the inspiration of the other. College teachers and officials also, require to be now and then refreshed with the conviction that their relations to their pupils are not simply official and formal, but are also personal and human, and incited to improve every occasion for kindly encouragement, for needed caution, for friendly reproof; in short, for any word or look or act which may promise good for this life or the next. If formal instructors make listless pupils, and supercilious teachers make contemptuous students; if suspicious teachers make lying scholars, and earnest, patient, and courteous teachers inspire respectful, confiding, and well-mannered pupils; and if a positive and fervent Christian faith is most efficient to sustain the highest

tone of manners and morals in any community,—it follows that the manhood of a college community requires that recognition and use of Christian influences which a college chapel is supposed to provide.

2. A complete education involves the use of religious motives and influences, and this whether we regard education as a training of the character or of the intellect. Education cannot be worthily conceived unless it respects the character. The well-trained or perfected man is a higher result to achieve than the accomplished logician, the smooth-voiced orator, the many-tongued linguist, the sagacious scientist, or the inspired poet. So thought the noblest of the ancients, interpreting the suggestions of nature; and the wisest of the moderns, taught by Christian truth and Christian example. The ideally perfect man is also universally recognized as reverent and devout, humble and self-forgetting before the divine in himself and the universe, and reaching forward by faith into the unseen and future life. If God educates the soul for immortality by the discipline of its earthly career, it should be no mean part of the aim of every truly liberal university to inspire its pupils with the highest Christian aims, and to instruct them to manifest these aims in an upright and attractive life. It is no good sign which we observe among American educators, that so many esteem these ends as inferior in importance, or, disdaining to use efficient means to attain them, show a scant sympathy for positive religious earnestness in their ideal of the successful student and of the successful teacher. At a time when character is said to command the highest price in the market, and not to be largely furnished under the law of supply and demand, it is no encouraging token which we notice, that some who seek to give direction to our new education, are so coolly indifferent or super-

ciliously disdainful concerning the presence or absence of a positively Christian element in our college and university life. The words of Milton are worthy to be pondered by all such, and indeed by all men: "The end, then, of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection."

Then, to stimulate and enlarge the intellect, no agency is so potent as an earnest and active religious faith. *Other things being equal*, the moment a youth begins to be inspired and controlled by such faith, his intellectual power and range and aspirations are enlarged. Indolence and animalism are renounced, the activities of his intellect are more evenly poised, and the results are more solid and effective. A sounder logic, a more candid judgment, and a simpler earnestness, take possession of the man who serves the living God, and holds communion with a personal Christ.

We say, *other things being equal*; for we do not forget that a fervent faith may be attended by intellectual narrowness, and mistaken views, both of the duty and the liberty of intellectual culture: but given similar advantages from nature and training, and given correct principles in respect to the relations of faith to culture, we assert that faith itself becomes an element of power and achievement which cannot and ought not to be overlooked. Would we educate a generation mighty in erudition, honest and untiring in research, candid and comprehensive in judgment, sagacious in conjecture, cogent in reasoning, fair in statement, fervid in eloquence, lofty in imagination, inspired by and inspiring to that intellectual enthusiasm, without which there is

no true intellectual greatness, we must educate that generation in the spirit and by the principles of the Christian faith. In science and letters' godliness has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of the life to come. All critics are forward to assert in a general way, that Christianity has been an efficient quickener of human thought and feeling. We ought never to forget that much of what it has done, it has achieved by leavening the higher education of successive generations. It may be true, that if what we call Christian civilization is to continue, and the peculiar and threatening evils of modern society are to be overcome, not only Christian churches, but Christian universities, must continue to exist, and both must become more positively Christian in their influence.

3. A college and university life is exposed to special moral and religious dangers, for which the college and university can best provide the prevention and cure. I need not recite the obvious temptations to which every society of young men is liable, although the strength and variety of these temptations cannot easily be exaggerated. I will suppose even that intellectual activity and social refinement have effectually excluded sensuality and falsehood, and trained to purity and self-restraint, to truth and uprightness. Even in such a case, it is not to be denied that intellectual activities and achievements not infrequently exclude frequent and fervent thoughts of God, and become unfriendly to an earnest and religious life. The work of the scholar takes a more exclusive possession of his inner life than the occupations of other men. The ambitious and successful student aims to be, and becomes, a king in his own domain — by the right of that power with which he is anointed of God, and which is accorded by the consenting acclaim of his fellows. The elevated nature



of his pursuits imparts to the devotee of science and letters, something akin to a sense of moral superiority, which now and then assumes its place. If a scholar is the discoverer of a new theory in science, or a new distinction in grammar, if he is the master of vast and varied erudition or uncommon learning, if he is the inventor of some useful instrument, or the writer of a work of authority, it is not uncommon, perhaps it is not unnatural, that he should regard himself as so supreme in his own domain as to be exempted from his personal obligations to the personal God, or as in such a peculiar sense a benefactor of his race, as to be released from any other obligations to the gentler charities of human life. The oldest representation, or record, which we have of human temptation, is of a temptation to intellectual insight and pride: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" and nowhere is this temptation so insidious or so strong as in an active and ambitious university.

College men, both instructors and pupils, are also sensitively and severely critical in their habits and feelings, pre-eminently in respect to any excessive or unseemly expression of opinion or feeling. With enthusiasm in any other sphere than their own, they are especially unsympathizing. The mathematician is moved to amiable compassion or unfriendly scorn by the ardor of the classicist, and the classicist responds with similar but more intense antipathies. It is not easy to decide whether scientists and theologians criticise one another more sharply than scientists or theologians of one school criticise scientists or theologians of every other. Religious activity and earnestness has its sides of weakness and defect, and to all these the sensitive souls of cultured *nonchalants* and contemptuous Sadducees are keenly alive. Young men who fall into the mood of

either are readily offended by what they call cant and enthusiasm in earnest religious souls. Their guardians and instructors readily yield to that sensitive hesitation and reticence in the expression of personal religious feeling which is natural to men of culture, and find manifold reasons for being silent and inactive in the kingdom of God. It has passed into a proverb, that the absorbing activities of college life, and its sensitively critical atmosphere, are eminently unfavorable to the free play of religious feeling, and the outward manifestations of religious zeal.

These disadvantages and exposures are more than counterbalanced by influences that may be made positively favorable to religious culture and activity. It is true that young men in college are frivolous and excitable, that they are sensitively alive to the good or evil opinion of their fellows, that their appetites are imperious, their antipathies are quick and strong, that they are repelled by pretension, and suspect enthusiasm. But, on the other hand, they frankly respond to the truth, they are open to conviction, and their consciences are not corrupted by the hollowness and knavery of mature life. They always know that they thirst for God, and often are not afraid to confess it. Their sense of duty is quick to admonish and condemn if it is sometimes impotent to restrain and control. If they are often ready to go with their set or faction or class or college when plainly in the wrong, they can also be aroused as by a common impulse, to move toward duty and God. If many who had assumed Christian vows, show themselves unfaithful amid the activities and excitements of college life, not a few are kindled to higher aims and better aspirations: not a few also, after a longer or shorter experience of the sin and folly of wandering, come back to their old faith with new fervor. "I write

unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one." It is a sad confession of weakness and disloyalty for pupils or teachers to say that it is idle to expect or labor for an active religious life among college students. Rather should the sentiment stir us to indignation, by whomsoever it is uttered, whether by Students, Instructors, or Philistines, it is so dishonorable to Christianity, and so untrue to fact, and so plainly either an expression of censorious spleen, or a confession of weakness, or an excuse for indolence. I have had some experience in pastoral duty in this college and other communities, and my fair share of discouragement in inciting younger and older persons to a more earnest religious life ; but I feel justified in saying that the younger members of this college church are as exemplary in their church relations as the older, when due allowance is made for their special circumstances ; and that the younger communicants live as exemplary and as earnest lives as the same number of adults, notwithstanding the absence of many ordinary social and family influences.

The *intellectual activities* of college life are also attended with peculiar moral and religious advantages. If knowledge sometimes puffs up, it also furnishes manifold reasons for humility. The moral conditions of eminent success in scientific research, are akin to those which admit to the kingdom of God. Intellectual aims and ambitions are not, in the long-run, consistent with sensuality or falsehood. If scholastic rivalries and contests are often deformed by envy, and disgraced by trickery, they also foster the spirit of justice and honor. The purposes which genuine culture proposes are favorable to earnest views of life, to reverent thoughts of the universe, and to noble aspirations for a perfected and immortal existence. Every species of intellectual disci-

pline awakens that reflection which is another name for the recognition of duty and of God. The truths of religion appeal for their authority to the human intelligence. Christ declared of himself and his mission, "To this end came I forth, that I might bear witness to the truth." Though intellectual culture may furnish subtle temptations to evil, "like the spear of Ithuriel, it heals the wounds which itself has made."

We contend that the special exposures and special advantages of college life require special and definite arrangements for religious worship and instruction. These the college itself should furnish. All the peculiar dangers noticed, arise from the fact that this life separates the students from the community and the church of their homes. This natural operation of a vigorous college life is felt, even upon students who continue to reside with their families. For those who have left their homes, it is a dream of romance to hope that a college town, in ordinary cases, can successfully furnish to three or five hundred youths domestic associations, or efficient church influences. Every college is a world by itself, with its own peculiar atmosphere, and its separate earth and sky. It must have an altar of its own, or lose the advantage of regular and formal worship. A community like this, so shut up to itself, composed of youth trained in Christian families, bred to habits of Christian worship, and many of them professing Christian aims and hopes, without its appointed hour and place for public prayer would furnish an offensive exception to the ways of other organized human societies. Attendance at such an exercise should follow the general law of the college for other prescribed duties. That attendance should be enforced, is no hardship so long as it is practised by instructors, and so long as the students are dealt with as reasonable beings, and their hon-

esty and honor in giving excuses are not challenged by vexatious suspicion and degrading distrust. One of the most useful results of a wise education is the acquisition of habits of method and regularity in meeting the requisitions of life. Compliance with the college rules which impose such regularity should become as easy and natural as obedience to the laws of nature, if for no other reason than that the students themselves may be delivered from hesitation and self-indulgence, from dawdling and childish caprice, in controlling their time, and meeting the stern demands of life. Were the student at his home, he might often be constrained against his will to be present at Family and Sunday worship, by parental authority and the force of public opinion; and for both of these in college days, there is and can be no efficient substitute but college rules. College prayers and Sunday worship will naturally fail of the best success when conducted in a formal and mechanical spirit; when they are dishonored by neglect, or want of sympathy in instructors, or made repulsive by the discomfort and squalor of the house of prayer. They are certain to be failures when they are publicly dishonored by making attendance voluntary, or are made attractive by such sensational devices as may excite for a week, but are certain to become wearisome after the lapse of a month. Compulsion, I know, is an odious word; but, as it seems to me, it is never so odious as when it is wrested out of all propriety in the spirit of the demagogue in education, or when addressed to sectarian or libertine prejudices. We trust that no Christian college will so far lose its self-respect in obedience to such a cry, as to close or dishonor its house of prayer.

Worship is itself the noblest and the most elevating act of the human soul. The habit of worship with inward reverence and outward decorum is a habit of all

others most needful to be used by the educated youth of our time. We live by admiration, hope, and love; and how many are now panting and dying for the want of them all! Prayer and praise hinder no man's life. An aspiration expressed at the prayers of a college chapel, or a thought dropped in the Sunday's preaching, has saved many a college student for this life and the life to come. One of the most eminent professors of the University of Berlin, who visited this country a few years since, was more interested and moved by the daily service in this college than by any single incident of his tour, it seemed so elevating and significant an homage to Christ.

4. A positive religious influence is required in college and university life, to arrest and turn back those atheistic and anti-Christian tendencies which are now so active in the circles of science and culture. These tendencies should neither be disguised nor despised. It may be questioned whether they are not more alarming than is generally believed. Some sober thinkers are ready to ask, whether if science is to proceed towards atheism with steps so willing and rapid as not a few scientists of late have seemed ready to take, and if literature shall so openly betray Christ with the kiss of Judas, as not a few critics and *littérateurs* have done within the last twenty years, — whether, after a few scores more of years have gone by, there shall be found a place any longer for Christian temples or Christian rites in those communities in which universities hold sway.

It is not surprising that the conception of a Christian university should be positively rejected by a certain class of reasoners as involving a contradiction in its terms. Those who contend that science and culture have always been the natural foes of theology and faith, must conclude that the university should recognize no

form of religious truth as true, and exert no positive religious influence.

We contend that neither faith nor theology is the historical or the natural foe of science and culture. We grant that Christian theologians have often feared and opposed many true theories in science because they were new, and have opposed them in the name of theology. But these same theories have been received and defended by other theologians. Indeed, it is only till very recently that scientists could possibly be arrayed against theologians, for the simple reason that the larger number of eminent and progressive scientists have been Christian believers, and not a few of them eminent theological thinkers. If we take a strictly scientific or logical view of the matter, a scientist who teaches atheism, or a literary critic who argues against Christianity, is as truly a theologian as a devout theist or a believing Christian.

We freely concede that science and culture are beneficial to faith. We assert that Christian theology and historical interpretation have been instructed and liberalized by science and criticism. We find no occasion to deny that this process has often been steadily resisted by those who have loved their dogmas better than the truth. But we also contend that faith is as helpful to science, as science is useful to faith; and we assert that in a truly Christian university, science will be more truly scientific than in one which is atheistic or anti-Christian, simply because faith, when other things are equal, tends to make science more thorough, more liberal, more candid, more comprehensive, and more sagacious.

The division of labor in modern science and research, tends to make the devotee of any single department, narrow and dogmatic in proportion to the completeness

of his mastery over his chosen field. A thinker who is limited to a single species of phenomena, or a single class of relations, is likely to be inappreciative or incredulous with respect to any other. If he extends his thoughts beyond, he is in danger of trying every theory by those facts and laws in which he is at home, and pronouncing upon every description of truth, with the confidence to which he is entitled only in his own sphere. Hence the readiness with which materialism and atheism are accepted by men who limit their knowledge to the phenomena and relations with which the senses are conversant, and supernaturalism is rejected by those who rarely think of what is involved in either human or divine personality.

Faith in God lifts the student above this narrowness, so far as it familiarizes the intellect with the one comprehensive thought to which every other fact and relation must be referred. Whatever department of nature, or even of mathematics or metaphysics, is the domain of the student, God presents himself as higher and deeper, and more comprehensive, than them all. Whatever evolutions history unrolls, whether the history concerns the upbuilding of the earth, or the fortunes of historic or pre-historic man, God is certainly *a possible* as he is the most satisfactory explanation of the plan and the realization of this procession of phenomena. Whatever forces and laws are discovered or assumed as the rational explanation of the past, and the certain prophecy of the future, these forces and laws are best explained by the intelligent thinker and the loving Father, who has prepared the earth for man's dwelling-place, and the scene of his discipline for a higher sphere of activity and enjoyment. A thoughtful believer in God cannot but be a broader thinker than the narrow atheist, who professes to solve the problem of the uni-



verse by some single formula of the latest fashion, rather than by faith in an intelligence and personality grander and richer than any material agency.

Hasty and superficial generalization is another characteristic of our times. It is seen on the one hand in the brilliant romancing of the eloquent scientific lecturer, in the flippant theories that characterize our historical and literary criticism, and the confident dogmatism of our one-sided theorists in psychology, ethics, and sociology. Digests and reviews and summaries present the ready materials for these dashing hypotheses. With these at command, the quick eye can discern analogies, and the hasty glance can overlook differences, the vivid imagination can shape the incomplete materials into an imposing theory, and the ready tongue can set it forth in the blandishments of imposing diction. A positive manner, a trenchant style, copious illustrations, and humorous allusions, all lend their charms, when all at once the living God is changed by the accomplished juggler, before the wondering eyes of the cultured but credulous crowd, into an unconscious force, or a persistent tendency. Or, as Christianity comes into question with its unmatched Christ, with his surprising, yet befitting, supernatural deeds, with his lofty claims, with their yet more wonderful fulfilment in his person, words, and works, these are all disposed of by a rapid whirl of the juggler's hand, as he blends into a confused image Christ's likeness to other masters of faith, while he overlooks the amazing differences which reveal themselves to the earnest and patient and truth-loving eye. The brilliant theorist and eloquent writer too often carries the day, especially with an audience of hilarious youth, or of over-cultivated men, whose pursuits and associations are for the moment removed far from the stern realities of life and of death. The new

Voltaire is more decorous and respectful in his manner than the old. The new Rousseau is less impulsive and more self-controlled. The new Hume is more exact in his knowledge, more respectful and restrained in his tone: but the new Voltaire and the new Rousseau and the new Hume shut their eyes as persistently to the very same facts and relations which their prototypes rejected with passion or ridicule or contempt. Atheistic and anti-Christian theories of history, of government, of politics, of culture, of ethics, and of human progress, are as narrow in data, as false in their conclusions, and as dangerous in their influence, in this generation as in any other, and none the less because they are more decorous, more learned, and more scientific.

Faith in God guards against the superficial, hasty, and brilliant theorizing of modern letters, because of the sobriety and caution and reverence to which it trains. The Christian temper is self-distrustful and yet self-reliant. It is cautious in seeking after truth, slow in forming its conclusions, and undaunted in holding and defending them. For these reasons the spirit of reverent faith *has a positive scientific value*. It was not in vain that Lord Bacon discerned a sameness in that child-like spirit which is the common condition of entering the kingdom of science and the kingdom of God. The distinct recognition and the earnest enforcement of Christian theism in a Christian university may become an important scientific force. It has created and fostered science and culture in the past. It must defend both in the future from the narrow dogmatism and superficial brilliancy of the theories of the day. That is no mean scientific service, then, to which a college chapel and a Christian pulpit are set apart in a Christian university. Formal lectures in chapel or pulpit on the so-called relations of science and religion are not often called for.

The preacher who ventures upon them is liable to go beyond his depth, and a slight oversight or venial error is not readily overlooked by his sharp-witted hearers. But the college preacher should be sensitively alive to all the tendencies of modern speculation. No electrometer should respond more quickly than he to the changing moods of the thinking of the times. He should anticipate as by instinct each new position for attack or defence which is taken by the unbelief of cultivated men. Being himself a man of culture, and thoroughly acknowledging it in all its forms as the rich and becoming fruitage of the kingdom of God, he should assert for faith itself a royal pre-eminence, and set forth its claims by arguments which command respect, and compel conviction. As he expounds to his hearers those themes which are common to them with all other men, — their doubts and temptations, their sorrows and sins, — he should also meet their peculiar intellectual wants, and justify himself to their intellectual respect. He should study and understand the student's mind and the student's heart by cherishing a constant sympathy with the student's life. In order to do this, he must be their friend and pastor; and when he is both, he can speak with the authority which only knowledge and love can impart. But still it is on moral and spiritual grounds that faith must stand or fall. If the students of a college are taught in their chapel from a man who commands their intellectual respect and their personal affection, there is little occasion to fear even from the dogmatism of modern speculation or the brilliancy of modern criticism. The living preacher is stronger than the professor or writer, even though he know less than either, because he deals with the conscience, which enforces duty; and the heart, which thirsts after God; and the longing after immortality, which will not be denied.

That there are honest sceptics, we have no doubt. That the way to a settled faith is to many earnest souls a long and arid road, we concede. And yet it may be true, that it is with the heart the fool says there is no God, and he that doeth the will of God shall know of Christ's doctrine whether it be eternal and true. That dogmatism and denunciation are specially unseemly and impotent with a student audience, we know. That something more than preaching is necessary to convince doubting minds, is true; but it is also true that an earnest and intelligent and thoughtful ministry to the hearts and lives of a college audience by one who is at once cultivated in his tastes, intelligent in his convictions, and young in his sympathies, is the most efficient and the most needed instrumentality against the scepticism of these times. For this reason, if for no other, the Christian college should have its own pulpit and its own Christian worship. That its worship may be edifying, it must be attractive; and its pulpit, to be useful, must be a place of power.

5. The objections which are urged against the positions which we have defended, are not decisive. The first which we name is that every so-called Christian college must necessarily be *sectarian*. The term *sectarian* as used by the objector is a term of reproach. The reproach which it implies is well deserved. It is most dishonorable to the Christian Church that it should be divided into sects, and that so much of the zeal which might burn so purely and brightly for God and Christ should be kindled of partisan heats, and flash into an unhallowed flame. We grant that it is practically necessary in the present divided state of Christendom, that the religious worship and teachings of a college should conform more or less nearly to the practice of some religious denomination; but we insist it

is not necessary that these should offend either the convictions or the tastes of any earnest or positive Christian believer. So far as the college is true to the lessons of science and culture, so far will it be anti-sectarian in its teachings and its spirit. The lessons of philosophy, the teachings of history, and the amenities of culture, all lift the Christian scholar above the narrowing influences of denominational divisions and the petty excitements of sectarian or personal quarrels, and open his heart to a more enlarged Christian charity. These healthful influences can sometimes be resisted, and the college may become a school of narrow judgments and a nursery of bitter and unchristian sectarianism. But these are not the legitimate fruits of genuine Christian culture. The tendencies of all sound learning and earnest thinking are in the direction of a more liberal charity and of a closer union between Christian believers. To these influences all Christian colleges must yield, if indeed they are not foremost in urging them forward. It may be reserved for them to contribute most efficiently to the restoration of unity to the Christian Church. So far as the Church itself is concerned, whatever may have been true in the past, the last thing which it needs to fear at present is that the Christian colleges of this country will intensify the sectarian spirit.

It is not, however, in the interest of a more catholic Christianity, that the objector usually argues. He more frequently appears as the advocate of what may properly be considered the *catholicity of science* itself. In this capacity he urges that the introduction of a positive religious element into college education interferes with that freedom from all prepossessions which is the essential condition of a broad and catholic culture. In the university, it is said, nothing must be assumed to be true; every thing must give account of itself,—

even the principles and methods by which we know, much more the religious beliefs and moral convictions on which men securely rest. All these must be sifted by that critical spirit which is the glory of modern culture. To anticipate the conclusions which the inquirer should receive, and especially to use them as material for positive teaching and earnest enforcement, is to offend against the spirit of true science, which, in order to be thorough and critical, must be absolutely free, especially from any religious dogmas.

To this we reply that the argument of the objector, if it proves any thing, proves too much. It would require that nothing whatever in knowledge or science should be presumed to be either fixed or true; that in astronomy, the Newtonian astronomy should have no precedence over the theories of Descartes; that in physiology, the doctrine of the Animal Spirits must be admitted to a hearing before adopting the modern theory of the nervous system. By the same rule, no principles of physics, or chemical philosophy, or syntax, or psychology, should be assumed by the teacher to be established, lest forsooth the pupil should be unduly biased, and his freedom to revise and correct his knowledge should be impaired. Such a conclusion would be rejected as ridiculous by every student of science. In literature and criticism, some principles are accepted as so axiomatic that they cannot be shaken, and do not need to be revised.

Surely it is not too much to claim that the great verities of faith concerning God and duty and Christ and the immortal life, may be received as so far fixed as to be the basis of positive teaching in the education of youth. Though not established by what is technically called the verified experiments of science, they are assumed as the foundation of all that is valuable in

human existence, — the authority of law, the security of property, the sacredness of home, the inviolability of honor, the obligation of truth, the tenderness of affection, the nobleness of self-sacrifice, and the triumphs of love and faith over death. Christian civilization has had too long and too varied a history in the past not to testify to some fixed foundation of truth. Christian literature and Christian art have blossomed into flower, and ripened into fruit, for too many generations, to leave room to doubt that Christ is indeed the tree of life. It is true that every generation raises new questions of doubt and difficulty concerning the adjustment of these truths to the new discoveries in science, the new revelations of history, and the new sentiments concerning manners; but it is also true, that the oftener these truths are challenged, the more satisfactory is the response which they give; and the more closely they are cross-questioned, the more triumphantly do they endure the test.

More than this is true. A Christian university is, other things being equal, the place of all others in which truth is likely to be sought for with the boldest and the freest spirit, for the simple reason that those who believe most earnestly in the Christian verities are the most fearless in submitting them to the severest scrutiny. While it is true that many religionists and so-called theologians are timid of new light, and suspicious of new investigations, it is also true that those whose faith is the strongest and the surest, are the most eager for new inquiries, and the most fearless of fresh investigations. On the other hand, whatever may be thought of the doctrines of our modern scientific atheists and literary anti-Christians, their spirit and temper bring little honor to the catholicity of true science. A university thoroughly pervaded by the modern irreligious spirit, would be of all schools of knowledge the

most intolerant of theists and Christians. Whatever it might profess, the dogmatism of its unbelief, and the credulity or earnestness of its faith, would sooner or later weaken its scientific uprightness. The founder of our faith declared with emphasis, "To this end came I forth that I might bear witness to the truth;" and for this reason it is that he applies the searching test, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

It might be urged still further, that no State college or State university under our political system can be Christian in its influence and teachings. We reply that that depends upon the character of the people of the State. If these are prevailingly Christian, they will not only tolerate, but they will require, that their schools of learning shall be directed by men of positive faith and of Christian zeal. Whatever difficulties or complications may be involved in the theory of their administration, the State universities of this country have hitherto been emphatically Christian. Whether they can be maintained in this spirit, it is not for us to ask, or to attempt to answer.

We are not unaware that the religious question is not an easy question to solve with the managers of many colleges and universities. We concede that the complications occasioned from many former traditions of the past are such that in our country it is not easy, and perhaps not possible, to found a new college upon an ideally correct theory. We have no quarrel with those institutions which are conducted upon another theory than our own, however much we deplore their defects.

It is enough for us to know that the great majority of our countrymen of English and Protestant descent prefer that their sons should be educated in colleges in which the utmost freedom of scientific inquiry, and the highest refinement of literary culture, are connected



with positive and earnest religious faith. Were it otherwise, were public sentiment other than it is, a college proposing Christian aims, would be none the less needed did it stand forth as the single representative of thorough culture as controlled and elevated by the presence of Him at whose name every knee shall bow, and who shall sooner or later bring into captivity every thought and aspiration of man. We desire never to forget, — we should be traitors to the past if we did, — that all the traditions of this college hold it to the service and honor of Christ, yet in no slavish or narrow spirit. It has not been backward to hail the beginnings of modern physical science. It has not feared to follow the subtleties of metaphysical speculation. It has not shrunk from new inquiries and new results in Christian theology. It has not been behind other institutions, nor behind the age, in applying the historic sense and the historic imagination to the rational interpretation of scriptural and Christian history. It has maintained a broad and free spirit in all its inquiries after truth, not loving Christianity better than the truth, but loving and honoring Christ because he is the truth. It has cherished a catholic spirit towards all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. It has, moreover, maintained the daily worship of God, with scarce an interruption, since it was founded. With the opening of the first College Hall, in 1718, this worship began. The first chapel, still standing, heard from 1763 to 1824 the orthodox discourses of Daggett, the finished sermons of Wales, the catholic and learned disquisitions of Stiles, and the imposing eloquence of Dwight. The second chapel for more than fifty years was the scene of the elaborate and refined eloquence of Fitch, the weighty arguments and the rousing appeals of Taylor, the calm and deliberate wisdom of Day, the passionate appeals

of Goodrich, and the tender and meditative pathos of Woolsey, whose names we have brought with us to remind us of the precious traditions of the past, and to hold us to fidelity for the future. We propose also to give special honor to two memorable names in the roll of Theology, Philosophy, and Christian saintliness, names which can never be forgotten by the graduates of Yale College, the names of **GEORGE BERKELEY** and **JONATHAN EDWARDS**.

We gratefully recognize the good providence of God in the erection of the edifice in which we are now assembled, and which we would now set apart for Christian uses. In the year 1864, Joseph Battell made a very liberal subscription toward the erection of a new chapel. To this sum fifteen thousand dollars were added by several distinguished benefactors of the college.\* The year after the corner-stone was laid, and the work of building was commenced, the college came into possession of fifty thousand dollars as a legacy from Mr. Battell, which was appropriated to the enlargement of the plan, and the decoration of the building. In grateful recognition of his liberality, this edifice has been formally named the Battell Chapel. This distinguished benefactor of the college was the son of a most enterprising, honorable, and benevolent merchant of the State of Connecticut, in simpler times, and the grandson of the first pastor of a characteristically Puritan town. Eminently loyal and true in his character, he retained till his death a heartfelt respect and ardent zeal for the faith and virtues of his New-England ancestry. A graduate of Middlebury College, he was a scholar all his life in his tastes and habits, although occupied with the cares of extended and manifold business enterprises. What he

\* William E. Dodge, William Walter Phelps, Simeon B. Chittenden, George Bliss, and Moses Taylor.

gave to this college, he gave in the fixed conviction that its religious interests were essential to its true prosperity, and that its religious welfare required a convenient and attractive house of worship.

The church which we have been enabled to erect, we do now consecrate to the honor and service of Christ, as a living person, and an ever-present power. This is no decorated mausoleum to a dead or dying faith which we have built. We are not here with sentimental make-believes to try to think of a symbol as a fact. We are not here to render an empty honor to the faith in which our fathers lived and died, but which to us is only a beautiful and inspiring fiction of the past. This is no empty tomb which we enter, whose hollow walls resound with mocking echoes to our cries after Christ, saying, "*Why seek ye the living among the dead?*" but it is a living temple which we would consecrate to his praise, and hallow as our future place of worship, as we bring into it our believing and loving hearts. Here are present instructors and guardians of youth, to whom Christian parents year by year bring the hope and pride of their households; and they are here to set apart this house as the place of their frequent worship,—with the pupils for whose welfare they labor, and whom they would train to Christian scholarship and Christian usefulness. Here are present the families that meet in our weekly assemblies to add their prayers to ours for the blessing and presence of God in all our Christian activities. Here are present the students,—those who are soon to go from us, who will never forget that they met once or twice in this new chapel before they were parted, and will not fail to leave behind their blessing upon this our new house of prayer. Here are present those who are to remain, to show, by the habits of decorum to which the beauty and comfort of this house will most cer-

tainly train them, that in the house of prayer they are always Christian gentlemen, and to create and transmit to future college generations a common sentiment which shall guard it from any desecration in thought or deed. May the daily services of this house of prayer be blessed by the quickening Spirit, that, as it awakens us by the touch of each morning light, shall also move our hearts to renewed thankfulness! Let all who shall worship here, make the uttered prayers their own. Let all their voices be heard in its songs of praise. May the quickly coming and quickly going college generations, who, as they come and go more swiftly than the weaver's flying shuttle, shall hear the preacher within these walls, be ever mindful that "all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. *But the word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*"

### III.

#### CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.\*

"BUT THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH: FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM."—*John iv. 23.*

IN these words we find the definition and warrant for Christian worship. The true—that is, the genuine—worshipper worships *the Father*, the living and loving personal God. He worships him *in spirit*; i.e., with spiritual affections and acts, as contrasted with outward doings or forms, restricted to place or time. He worships him *in truth*,—with some intelligent and just conception of *who* God is, and *what* his worship signifies. This definition of Christian worship distinguishes it from the formal and mechanical on the one hand, and the sentimental on the other. It does not exclude expression by act or speech, by rite or song, but only insists that the emotion and thought and obedience of the inner man shall make the worship spiritual and true.

*The warrant* follows the definition, and is founded upon it. The Father seeketh such to worship him. If God is a *spirit*, he can accept only that homage which represents the man as he is. The place, the time, the position, the word, the tone, are nothing, except as they express and represent the man within. If he is the

\* *First Sunday of regular worship in the Battell Chapel, Sept. 17, 1876.*

creating and loving Father, he must seek, i.e., earnestly desire that men should give him their love and service. The works and ways of God are perpetually attesting that this is true. The heavens, as they bend over man with their bright and benignant aspect; the earth, as it yields its fruits and flowers, and utters its thousand voices of love and gladness; the heart of man, as it yearns after the divine love and sympathy; sorrow and disappointment, as they suggest the need of a consolation which human sympathy can never impart; the sense of guilt and weakness, as they cry out for divine forgiveness and help; above all, Christ as God revealed to man, with his never ceasing call, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden;" and the movements within the soul that lift and direct it toward God, — all these confirm the truth, that the heavenly Father always seeks, and always delights to find, the sincere and genuine worshipper.

Such is the conception of Christian worship as it is defined by our Lord. Its perfect and universal realization lay in the distant future — although its beginning had then dawned upon the earth. "*The hour cometh, and now is;*" i.e., begins to be. But even now the hour has not yet fully come. Men still need to be reminded of what true worship is, and that God seeks it from every living man. There are reasons special to ourselves why the theme is appropriate for us. It cannot be inappropriate on this occasion to speak of Christian worship in its relation to ourselves, as individuals and as a community.

1. Let us consider worship as an emotion or sentiment. Worship is conspicuously an exercise of feeling. It can never be genuine without feeling. The words and rites and observances which are so often used as its semblance, uniformly express or imply feeling

intense and fervent. The uplifted hand, the reverent eye, the bended knee, the standing position, the prostrate form, the measured chant, the plaintive melody, the piercing cry, the resounding chorus, the words of prayer, all signify that the worshippers are moved by strong and sustained emotion. The capacity for these emotions is universal to man. It is as natural to man to worship as it is to breathe. The instant man is confronted with God, he cannot but respond with reverence. His breath is hushed by awe, his speech is checked in mute wonder. If man cannot behold a lofty precipice or a sounding cataract, or confront a furious tempest or the raging ocean, without appropriate emotion, no more can he think of God without the response of his heart. We do not say that man cannot withdraw his mind from God, and doubt of God and the evidences of God, and so withhold the answer of his homage, but simply that he cannot believe in God, and think of God, and fail to adore him. The vault of the heavens at night, as all consent, fill and elevate the soul of every man who lifts his eyes upward, and gazes, and knows while he looks, that the God whom those heavens suggest as possible or real, moves the soul even more powerfully than the heavens, if his heart follows and obeys his steadfast gaze. But worship is more than adoration. God is more than a great Unknown who moves us with wonder. He is the loving Father; and as soon as he is recognized as such, just so soon does man respond with natural gratitude as quickly and as necessarily as the breath of the morning rises at the touch of the morning light. But worship is more than gratitude superadded to wonder. It is also supplication. So far as God is believed to be a person who feels for our wants, and cares for our sorrows, and delights to give and receive sympathy, we spontaneously

ask for what we believe he can and is willing to give. In these three forms of adoration, thanksgiving, and prayer, every man is by nature prompted to worship.

Not only is worship natural to man whenever he finds an object of worship, but it shows itself to be natural, because it forces him to find such an object. Every man has his god, — whether it be a fetich, an ape, a serpent, a calf, a Jupiter, a Diana; or whether it be an abstraction, like Evolution, Humanity, Liberty, or Progress, Genius, Science, or Literature, the Immensities or the Abysses, the Absolute or the Unknowable Unknown; or some gifted human being, as Newton or Goethe; or some departed human spirit, which the soul idealizes into a divinity, and worships with its holiest and purest aspirations and its noblest resolves.

2. Worship is more than a sentiment or an exercise of the heart. It is also a duty; and as such, it is an act of the will, which is enforced by the conscience. Worship may be fervent and frequent, and yet be impure, selfish, and wicked, if the man who offers it is not in character and purpose subjected to the will of the Holy One. The murderer may be moved with no unreal fervor when he adores the God whom he grossly misconceives, and thanks for smiling upon his deeds of blood, or propitiates by rites as cruel. The harlot in her life of lust, the thief in his course of robbery, the fraudulent in his machinations of deceit, are not necessarily pretenders and conscious hypocrites, when warmed by the fervors of devotion. They are simply sentimentalists, whose religious feelings neither spring from allegiance to duty, nor re-act upon it. It is well if their fervors of feeling are not made a substitute for duty, if so much prayer and praise are not set over against so much self-denial, so much self-control, and so much good will to man. Sentimentalism may be aroused by the magnifi-



cent excitements of the mass into which an inspired musical composer has wrought the best aspirations of his life, by strains and choruses that are almost worthy to be heard in heaven, or it may find incitements and expression in the rudest chorus and the rousing melody of the camp-meeting or the revival. But if it does not express the aspirations of the pure in heart, of the penitent for sin, or the seeker after an unselfish life, it may be only offensive in proportion to its fervor.

On the other hand, allegiance to duty necessarily inspires worship. The man who obeys conscience with a supreme devotion cannot but worship the living God. A good tree not only brings forth its good fruit, but, in the process of growing the fruit, it puts forth the leaves and flowers of refreshment and beauty. The eye that waits upon the law of duty with steadfast singleness, cannot but also lift itself often to the Holy One, who is ready to manifest himself to the sight of the pure in heart. This is not all. Worship is not only inspired by duty, but it inspires and sanctions duty. There are no motives so strong and overpowering as those which worship kindles and sustains. All other influences together, which make for good, — self-approbation, self-respect, regard for the opinion of others, — fail to take such a hold of man's conscience and of man's life, as do faith in the ever-present God, and an actual communion with the Father of our spirits, as revealed in Christ. Hence worship is not only a duty, but it is the first and last of duties, the most fundamental and indispensable of duties, because it involves all other duties, and is the very life and potency of duty, in the soul of man.

3. Worship concerns the intellect, and involves intelligence. It was an adage of other times, that ignorance is the mother of devotion. It is held in our times in

another form, as the last result of modern speculation, "God as infinite, and cannot be known to the finite: the object of worship must be, and is necessarily, unknowable, and must be forever unknowable, because exact and positive truth in the highest meaning of the word concerning God can neither be gained by his works, nor revealed through language." Worship, it is urged, is a matter of feeling only. Let each man fill his heart with it as he may. "Let each generation construct its altar as it will, and think of its God as it must, and believe in prophet and apostle as it can; but each generation must have its own altar and its own God and its own Messiah." Here again is sentimentalism in another form, which not only separates worship from duty, but divorces it from truth, and declares that it can have no possible relations to science. Practically, it divorces religion from the scientific reason, and critical intelligence. It plainly declares, or effectually insinuates, that, though worship is necessary to man in the weakness of his heart, it is unworthy of him in the strength of his intellect, because, forsooth, whenever his intellect essays to grasp what it worships, it will find that it clutches at a shadow. Such is the condescending patronage with which worship is accepted by certain circles that call themselves scientific in a special sense, when they declare that religious feeling can have no relations to definite and reasoned truth.

This is not the doctrine of the New Testament. "We know what we worship," is the language of the Master of Christian thinking. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you," was proclaimed at Athens, by the greatest of Christian reasoners. Nor is it alone the dogmatic teachings of sound science, or sound theology. Whatever extravagant things have been uttered by theologians about the relation of faith to reason, it

still remains true that the service of faith is a reasonable service. We cannot discuss this question here. If there are able and acute thinkers who say that the knowledge of the finite is alone worthy to be called truth, and that all knowledge of the infinite must change with the guesses of each generation, there are also multitudes of thinkers as acute, and perhaps more profound, who find that all finite truth presupposes a personal and self-existing God, and is but an expression of his thought and will, and who conclude every act of research, and every discovered result, with a hymn of wonder and gratitude and supplication.

4. This leads us to consider the relation of worship to form and expression. Worship, to be genuine, must be a worship of the Spirit; but to be true and complete, it must be expressed in outward action. All earnest feeling pants for expression. It breaks out into word and gesture. If speech is denied because words cannot do justice to its intensity and volume, it expresses in sighs and moans what cannot be uttered by language, or superadds to speech the subtile quality of musical tone or eloquent fervor. It makes the body an instrument of language by look and gesture, by the uplifted hand, the bended knee, and whatever stately or solemn rite may seem to be required.

When it is said it is essential that Christian worship should be spiritual, it is neither commanded nor implied that it should or can be independent of word or form, but only that the word or rite should never be a substitute for the inward emotion and purpose. We must worship God in spirit if we worship him at all. But if we worship him in truth, i.e., in fact, the spiritual act will make itself manifest. Even in the sphere of pure intellect, the thought is not complete till it has made for itself a body in a word. Scientific thought must

make for itself a language to give clearness and effect to its inner life. How much more in the sphere of feeling and of duty is it an impulse which man cannot resist, to manifest his desires and his resolves, by words and symbolic rites. If we pray at the corners of the streets to be seen of men, we do not pray at all, and therefore we are bidden to enter into our closets. He who never prays to his Father who seeth in secret, never prays at all. But neither the word of the Master, nor his example, nor the logic of his teachings, forbid — rather do they all sanction — the outward act of worship in all the forms in which worship is appropriate. The protests of Friend and Puritan against the religion of the lip and the knee were not a whit too earnest in the days in which they were uttered. They need to be still remembered in our more ostentatious and elaborate devotion. The æsthetic excitement through the eye and the ear, processional pomp and spectacular shows, so far as they divert the attention, or gratify the sensibilities, to the displacement of spiritual emotion, are as empty and offensive in our time as in the days of Christ. And yet it is no less true that the devout heart in all time is impelled to break forth in uttered words of prayer, and will delight itself in every aid to devotion which solemn music and common supplication and eloquent exhortation can minister in the stately temple when a great congregation is moved by common sympathy, or the scanty circle in which two or three only are gathered in the name of the Master, and the Master is present to fulfil his word.

Hence the Christian worshipper is catholic in his sympathies. He does not refuse prescribed and traditional forms for his prayers and his hymns, even though he may prefer the freedom of those forms of speech which are shaped by the fervor of the hour. He can

rise to God on the mighty pinions of song which the great composers of anthem and chorus have given to the church, and he is moved by the simple melodies which satisfy an uninstructed ear. He hears with delight, as he walks of an evening, the strains of the hymn that sends a hallowed gladness through a Christian home, and is touched with tender sympathy if awakened in the morning by the chant of a band of children who are trained to greet the sun with an early song. He will overlook much that is defective in the worship, that is unlettered and uncouth in its form, because of his sympathy with the spirit that is edified by the words and imagery and tones which grate upon his ear, and offend his taste. But this sympathy with the spirit does not require him to be positively pleased with the doggerel verse, the wretched grammar, the incoherent logic, or the strained rhetoric, which are never so offensive as when they are used in the service of Christian devotion. The more intense is the earnestness and the more devout the spirit of the Christian worshipper, the more acute is his sensibility to whatever in word or form or rite connects associations of dishonor with prayer or praise of the living God.

Let these thoughts suffice us as to the nature of Christian worship. We derive from them the following practical lessons:—

1. The worship which a man offers is always in harmony with his life—neither better nor worse. I mean real worship. I know very well that not a few bad men of very doubtful reputation are very much given to prayer. Not a few even are driven to prayer by the consciousness of the sins which they are not willing to abandon. Some of them pray with the hope of balancing their moral reckoning, by setting off so many prayers against so much rottenness or

knavery or deceit. Then, again, others are so far from being conscious hypocrites, that they are scourged by a knowledge of guilt to redouble their cries for pardon, while they repent of nothing except the exposure or consequences of their sin. But in these cases, there is no real worship. Such worship would not be half so frequent did men remember that a man's prayers are just what his character and his life make them to be; that the worship of a man is to his moral self just what the flower is to the plant, the consummation of the grace and beauty of which it is capable, or the exhalation which is emitted from its rottenness. Separate from the purpose of duty, it is and can be nothing but a factitious excitement, which may be dangerous just in proportion to its fervid emotion or eloquent speech.

But what place does this doctrine of worship provide for the prayer of the publican, who brings nothing into the temple but a life of uncleanness and fraud, and breathes no other prayer than "God be merciful to me a sinner"? How is it consistent with the hymn which we so often sing, "Just as I am — O Lamb of God, I come, I come"? Must a man be good already before he can dare to come to God? We answer these natural questions thus — The prayer of the publican, if it means any thing, means the abandonment of the old life, and the assumption of the new. His cry for mercy seeks for forgiveness for the past, and unconditioned help for the future; but it is not accepted, because it is not a prayer, if it does not offer in sacrifice the purpose of the man to be wholly new. No man is released from the obligation to worship, for two reasons. Every man who is right in his purposes and aspirations will be a worshipper. It is as natural for such a man to worship as it is to breathe or to sleep. You can no more conceive that a man with whom the law of duty is supreme, should

withhold the worship of adoration and thankfulness, of supplication and penitence, than you can conceive a triangle with four sides, or a circle that is triangular. The second reason is, that God is so important to man, and man is so near to God, and the influences which worship excites are so potent, and man's need of help from God so constant and so intense, that allegiance to duty will necessarily bring him to God. Hence the first thing that the prodigal thinks of when he comes to himself is, I will arise, and go to my father. And so it is ever afterwards. No duty to man can be made an offset against the recognition of God. The instant that a man consecrates himself to duty, he consecrates himself to God. He bows his heart in adoration. He lifts his eyes in praise. He bends his knee in prayer. If he walks in the light of duty, he is guided by the eye of God. If he offends against conscience, he confesses his sin to God. If he is conscious of weakness, he asks the help which God alone can give. It is useless to ask which begins first, — allegiance to duty, or allegiance to God. Practically, they begin together.

2. Fervor and earnestness of worship are required by every man for his strength and peace. To every man, God is equally near and equally important. In every man, there are capacities for love and gratitude and homage to the Father of his spirit. Every man has sins of which God takes notice, and which God alone must forgive; and which he will not, and ought not to, forgive unless he be entreated. Every man has sorrows which God alone can comfort, and weaknesses which he alone can help.

It is not enough that a man may say he is upright and honest and earnest towards his fellow-men and to himself. It is not only a fair question to ask, but it is a question which every man cannot but ask of himself,

*What am I toward God?* It is not enough that he can answer, I would gladly worship, if God were real to my convictions, and near to my faith; for the answer cannot but return, Why do you not seek till you find him? Why, if you worship in purpose, do you not worship in fact? Why, if you would welcome his presence, do you not ask to be admitted? To whom but to such is the promise given, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"? To whom but to all?

Let no man be content with the ante-chamber who desires to enter into the palace. Let no man say to himself, that he hopes to enter, and intends to enter, who does not take a single decisive step forwards and within.

Worship is not only a need for the men of our times, but it will continue to be as long as God shall exist, and men shall be made in God's image. Those who assume that worship shall gradually die out with the progress of culture, forget that as culture, i.e., true culture, shall advance, man will know more of himself, and more of the universe, and consequently the more will he know of his Creator, and of his need of his help and his blessing. Unless conscience is to be dethroned as well as God by the progress of knowledge, the privilege and duty of worship will be more and more clearly acknowledged, the need of forgiveness will be more apparent, and the blessing of a life formed after the divine will, will be more and more distinctly recognized. If atheism, whether speculative or practical, is for a time to gain the ascendancy, that ascendancy will be briefer than ever before. The cycles for the re-actions of truth and the so-called revenges of truth are now more rapid in their revolution, and terribly convincing in their results. May God have pity on the generation, that, ceasing to



worship God, shall fall to worshipping one another, and end by each man worshipping himself! The worship of genius or science or culture may stimulate the intellect, but it leaves the heart hard, and the affections unsatisfied. Whatever the learning of other men may teach them, let ours lead us to God. Whatever the thought or culture of other schools may inspire, let ours be so enlightened and liberal as to find a place for the most ardent thankfulness, the most fervent praise, and the most earnest supplication, in the theory and practice of our life. That is a narrow view of the universe that finds no place and no need for God: that is a degrading view of man which denies him intimate and affectionate relations with his Father in heaven. Lord Bacon says, they that deny God, destroy man's nobility; and he gives as a reason, that as a dog, by his respect for man, rises out of his animal life, so man, to be truly noble, must reverence and trust a Being higher than himself.

3. The outward expression of worship in word or form or rite is often most important. Separate from the spirit, it may be worse than worthless; but as the expression of what is required within, it should never be overlooked or dishonored. No man should neglect the forms of worship for himself, or dishonor them in another.

No man should neglect worship for himself. It is easy to reason, I have not the spirit of worship: why should I assume the attitude, or follow the words of prayer? or thus, — I have the spirit: why subject myself to the bondage of giving it expression? Were this reasoning applied to words and acts between man and man, it would silence all those utterances, and suppress those nameless acts, which give grace and beauty to human life. My friend knows that I honor and love him: why should I tell him that I do, by speech or act?

or my neighbor knows that I trust him: why should I offer him the empty formalities that imply that I do? As between man and man, we all see most clearly that speech and manners are essential to hold men to the thought of that respect which their fellow-men ought to receive, or that neighborly love of which a bow or a compliment is a semblance. Every one knows that either, even though hollow, is better than a surly silence, or studied and complete neglect. The same is true of the expressions of honor and thanks to God. It is not well to utter the words, or assume the attitude, of worship without the spirit; but it is better far than to neglect both form and emotion, and to live a life of confessed neglect of the God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways. Better repeat with whatever earnestness and solemnity thou canst gather for the moment, the brief prayer of thy childhood; better do this, and regularly, than never pray at all. It may be that God will see in it more earnestness than thou dost suspect, and, meeting at first only thy formal prayer, will incline thee to worship Him in spirit and in truth. If the heavenly Father seeketh such to worship him, it may be that he will meet thee in some act of formal homage, and awaken the spirit of love and devotion. Again, no right-minded man would dishonor or trifle with the worship of others, whether it be the brief utterance which the laborer offers with uncovered head at his lonely meal in the field, or whether an assembled congregation gives itself to solemn praise and prayer. It is not only an act of rudeness by look or attitude or smile or word to break in upon the decorum appropriate to acts of worship, but, in the ordinary judgments of men, it is justly regarded as an act of careless profanity or vulgar insolence. That such judgments have sometimes been too harsh when pronounced by lookers-on at

our worship, who do not understand how nearly allied to virtues are some of the besetting sins of academic youth, should make no difference with those of us who believe in truth, and desire to be delivered from shams of all sorts,—even those shams which easily beset ourselves,—or wisely accept the restraints which good manners impose, even in our excitable and sympathetic moods.

We are assembled for the first time this day, by ourselves, in the beginning of this college year, in this our attractive house of worship. The manners which we shall expect and require of one another for this year may have much to do with the manners of this community for a college generation. They may have much to do with the character and habits of many of us as individuals for all our earthly life. They may have more to do with that life which the most thoughtless aspire and hope to live in the higher temple of God.

An old, unlettered slave was overheard praying thus: “May I so live, that when I die, I may *have manners*, and know what I should say when I meet my Lord in heaven!” It would be well for all of us to remember, that in our spirit and acts, not only of worship, but of the life which our worship symbolizes, we are forming those *manners* which we shall carry with us into the life that is immortal.

## IV.

### *CHRIST A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.\**

"TO THIS END WAS I BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH. EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE." — *John xxi. 37.*

JESUS was on trial for his life on a charge of sedition in claiming to be a king. The charge was expressed in the question, "Art thou a king then?" His answer to this charge was a puzzle to his judge. His kingdom was not of this world, and yet it was to be supreme and universal. Pilate could understand an authority which was enforced by Roman legions, and maintained by Roman bribes, but could not comprehend his prisoner when he rested his claims simply upon the truth to which he was to bear witness. "'What is truth?' said the jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer." The severe assurance of the prisoner brings into bold relief the frivolous scepticism of the judge. It would almost seem that in the two were represented the extremes of modern thought and character.

The truth to which Christ bore witness at the first was the truth which concerned his person, and his claims to the love and obedience of men. On the cross he bore witness to the love of God for sinning man. By rising from the dead, and ascending to his Father, he testified that he was indeed the Son of God.

\* July 7, 1872.

By his present spirit he has witnessed ever since for the living God as against the godlessness and self-worship to which man is prone.

To the truth which enforces the duties of men, Christ also bore witness, first, by his spotless and inspiring life, by his penetrating and faithful words, and by the long succession of obedient disciples, who have imitated the one, and exemplified the other.

There is, however, truth of other descriptions than the truth which we call religious and ethical. There is the truth of science, which is expanded every year into grander proportions; the truth of letters, which is more and more abundant and instructive; and the truth of the imagination, which is more and more varied and inspiring. Has Christ any testimony to give concerning these kinds of truth? Does Christ hold any relations to Science, Letters, or Art? And, if so, what are these relations? We believe that they are many and important. We also hold that the spirit of earnest discipleship to Christ always favors, and often inspires, the highest achievements in every one of these forms of truth. We hold that Christianity not only satisfies the wants of which the scholar is conscious as a man, but that it is equally efficient and equally essential in stimulating and guiding him rightly as a scholar. In other words, we contend that allegiance to Christ is a favoring, and in one sense an essential, condition of the best human culture and education.

This is our theme. In proposing it, we do not assert that religion and culture are the same. We do not contend, that for the ends of humanity, or the ends of the individual, the one can or ought to be substituted for the other. Each is in a certain sense independent of the other, and each must be sovereign in its sphere, in order to serve the master of both. But if Christ is the

Lord of the Universe and the Sovereign of the Human Soul, then he must witness most efficiently for whatever is true in science and culture, and against those forms and tendencies of either which are defective or false.

1. The first argument which we offer is directly suggested by the text. Christianity attaches supreme importance to faith, and therefore enforces most efficiently the habit of allegiance to truth. Faith is the one comprehensive duty which it enforces, but faith by its very nature asserts and insists that its claims are most reasonable. We need raise no question here as to what are the special relations of faith to reason. We only need to notice, that, when faith is exercised, it is an act so reasonable in the view of him whom it moves, that he cannot find it in his heart to withhold it. The struggles that precede the Christian life are over when the heart renders its loving and complete allegiance to what it knows to be true, be that more or less. As soon as the eye becomes single, the whole body is full of light.

It will be conceded that a great advance is made in character when Christ is accepted in faith. We affirm, that, other things being equal, a change as important is also wrought for the habits and aims of the intellect. The disciple who takes Christ as the master of his life and the end of his living because he is believed to be the truth, cannot but apply similar habits of allegiance to his judgments of every kind of truth. These new habits cannot but affect his entire intellectual activity. It is true his devotion to the truth of Christ will not give him the truth of information which patient reading and quick recollection alone can furnish. It will not supply the acumen or sagacity of thought which a more gifted nature and sharper discipline can alone impart. It will not remedy the defects of early training;

but, these things being equal in two men, the loyal disciple of Christ is more likely to find the truth in Science and in Letters, and, when he finds it, to hold it fast, and to hold it with earnest energy.

We concede that the law of success in culture, is now so generally understood to be allegiance to truth, that this allegiance may be enforced by other than Christian motives. So is it with the duties of morality. But this does not make it the less needful that this allegiance should be perpetually re-enforced by the highest of all motives. It is one thing to reverence truth with the passion of self-sacrifice because it is hallowed by the life and death of a divine Master, and another to be constrained to it by the natural conscience, by the associations of one's training, or by the honor of the fraternity of cultivated men. We do not disesteem the lower motive because we honor the higher. Nor need we consider the exceptional cases, in which the man is better or worse than the spirit of his faith or his no-faith. It is not material to our argument that we should explain why the so-called Christian scholar is sometimes less truthful and conscientious in his research and his arguments, in his science and his eloquence, than the man who professes no such discipleship to Christ. It is enough for our argument, that the one is truly said to have a more Christian love of truth than the other. In the one case, the man is better than his motives; in the other, the motives are better than the man. The superficial and pretentious philosopher as truly denies his Master Christ, as does the false and uncouth hypocrite. The hollow rhetorician does the same, and whoever also, and in whatever way, consciously offends against truth in Science, in Letters, or Art. Whosoever is not of the truth hears not Christ's voice. Whatever we may make of Christ or Christianity, it should never be for-

gotten that it is chiefly through its powerful and penetrating influence it has come to pass that the one term by which the most cultured men designate the consummate excellence in Science, Letters, and Art, is Truth, and the one excellence by which they characterize the condition of success is a *conscientious* spirit. The fact is full of meaning, that men have learned to designate success by such phrases as *true* science, *true* philosophy, *true* poetry, *true* art, and to recognize the fact that a prime condition of success in each is a conscientious and honest temper.

We might argue this further from the special honor which in modern times is bestowed upon *honest misgivings*, and the extravagant homage which is rendered to doubt. These have become so extreme that it would seem at times as though the spirit of a person's faith is measured by the number of his questionings, and the strength of his allegiance to truth is tested by the positiveness and daring of his denials. In one respect, modern doubt is a necessary attendant of progress; in another, it is a lawful protest against the human corruptions of divine truth; in another, it is a morbid attendant of much reading, and of a proud or a weak individuality. But whatever in individual cases may be its causes or its effects, the sympathetic deference which it exacts is a testimony to the supreme honor which Christ has trained Christendom to set upon faith as an individual conviction, and upon the truth as its potent instrument. It is worthy of notice, that while, in the schools of atheism and materialism, theistic doubts and Christian aspirations are treated with scorn, it is in the Christian Church alone that the honest seeker after truth is cherished in proportion to the number of his difficulties. It is a significant commentary on this Christian homage to truth, that Christianity is the only



religion which has ever summoned its devotees to deny the authority of its founder if it would exemplify his spirit, or has bidden them to seal their testimony to the truth by conceding that his miracles are scientifically impossible, his history is a partial romance, and his kingdom an ideal metaphor.

2. I proceed next to show particularly the spirit of faith which Christianity exacts when joined with Christian love, as manifest in certain special virtues. Conspicuous among these are *docility* and *candor*. It was a thought no less profound than beautiful of Lord Bacon, that to enter the temple of science, it were as necessary that a man should become a little child, as it is to enter the kingdom of heaven. The prayer of the Christian is, "What I see not, teach thou me." "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." His rejoicing is this, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, he maintains his conversation in the world. His progress in discipleship is marked by casting down imaginations or romantic fancies, and bitter and obstinate prejudices, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. To abjure an error, and to learn a new truth, often involves hard warfare in the field of Science and of Letters, of Politics, and of Public Life,—as hard as it is to do the same in the sphere of the feelings, or of self-sacrifice. For success in either, Christian motives are most efficient; and Christian motives are often required. The man who daily casts at the feet of his Master the shameful and filthy burdens of prejudice that he has gathered from his inner and outer experience, will, other things being equal, more readily do the same in his intellectual activities and achievements. Other things being equal, he will be more hospitable to new truths, and more courageous for new investigations.

The Christian student is also more likely to be *liberal* and *catholic* in his opinions and tastes. We do not deny that he has special exposures to be narrow and sectarian, but we contend that he has special securities and incitements for the opposite. Even his narrowness springs from a noble misgiving, lest his faith in the God of truth shall be dishonored by some pestilent and plausible error, or his faith in human goodness shall be ensnared by some specious sophistry, or tempted by some brilliant wickedness as glorified or palliated by genius. Such narrow apprehensions, if narrow, derive a certain elevation from the motives which they misapply. But still it remains true, that liberality is the legitimate consequence of the Christian faith. Much has been said of late of the traditional narrowness of theology, its hereditary battles with the new phases of science, with the new theories of history, and the new developments of literature. Much might be said, which has usually not been said, of the traditional enterprise of Christian philosophers in welcoming new truths, and of the catholic feeling of hospitality with which the Christian Church has entertained new phases of thought. It should not be forgotten that science has its sects, literature has its parties, history its opposing theories, and even poetry and fiction their hostile and often embittered rivalries. The concentration which modern research now requires, limits its devotees to necessary ignorance and a contemptuous depreciation of activities which are remote from our own. There is no narrowness so intense as the narrowness of the scholar, because it is so self-satisfied; no sectarianism so positive concerning that in which he is a master, because he is well assured of what he knows. Against this divisiveness of modern intellectual life, the comprehensiveness of the Christian faith and the largeness of Christian

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charity furnish the best counterpoise. There is one place where the lines of all knowledge meet, and that is the throne of the living God. There is one mind which can comprehend science in all its branches, and that is the mind of God. There is one kingdom to the progress of which all forms of culture stand related, and that is the kingdom of Christ. The devout scientist, as often as in the hour of his devotions he thinks of the vastness of God's dominions, must look beyond the narrowness of the domain to which he is limited by his intellectual activities. The Christian historian or philologist or critic cannot fail to find in the kingdom and love of Christ suggestions of friendly liberality for other forms of culture than his own. We say nothing of the temper to which Christ trains every believing disciple, — of the large-hearted charity, the self-respecting courtesy, and the generous recognition of others, which have not a little to do with scientific liberality and philosophic breadth and enlarged catholicity. Were Christ to visit our temples of knowledge more frequently, and were he to be more readily recognized, there would be less petty wrangling, less boastful egotism, less spiteful criticism, and less acrid hostility, than now prevail. Not only might He now and then inspire our doctors with the abundance of wisdom which lies hid in his simple speech, but he might now and then be moved to drive out from the temple of truth the selfish traders in knowledge.

The Christian student is also eminently *enterprising* and *hopeful*. The believer in a personal God has a ground for believing in the definite progress of science, which is broader and firmer than the unbeliever can furnish in his blind faith in development, or his vague personifications of nature. The theist has a theory of nature which provides for all that atheism vouches for,

and for more. Faith in the living God is a better basis for the stability of the physical forces than confidence in fate. The belief in a wise personal sovereign of the universe provides more rationally for the regularity of nature's laws than does the persistence of force. The doctrine of a self-existent thinker, whose manifest thoughts may require ages for future scientists to read, opens in every direction a king's highway for their triumphant processions as they return laden with spoils of conquest from the more distant provinces of knowledge. It may serve at least as well as the empty theory of indefinite development, which is to plunge the Kosmos a second time into the abyss of chaos when its destined cycles are complete. Nature glows with intellectual excitement to the scientist who worships the living God. The believer in a kingdom of Christ in which every one who is of the truth is to hear Christ's voice, finds, for the building up of that kingdom, the amplest opportunity for political and social reforms, for manifold discoveries and applications of public and private economies, politics, and ethics, such as no believer in mere progress can rationally conceive. The truth that the Christ whom he trusts has all power in his hands, is confirmed by the fact that those ethical and social forces which Christ can employ have scarcely begun to be developed. The manifest dependence of physical and scientific resources on moral energy, on conscientious obedience, and on trust in God, for efficiency in the shock of nations, when millions meet millions in the field, puts a new interpretation upon the old battle-song of "God is our refuge and strength." The quickness with which enlightened nations have in the last ten years responded, both to the calls to battle, and the summons to peace, is a feeble earnest of what civilization, with its appliances, may yet accomplish in the service and honor of Christian truth.

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The Christian philosopher and historical critic finds *no occasion for despondency*, either for science or faith, in the new aspects of a theistic materialism, or of social generalizations. He does not fear lest the mattock of the geologist shall unearth some scroll from beneath, or the telescope of the astronomer shall bring some report from afar, which shall scientifically establish the fact that there is no God. Nor does he tremble lest some new critical researches shall drive the supernatural Christ out of history, for the simple reason that the principles on which these truths of faith adjust themselves to the axioms and methods of science have been long ago fully tried. Whatever errors faith has committed in defending the truth,—and we do not deny that these errors are manifold,—they are not so conspicuous as the constant abandonment by the scientific assailants of faith of their weapons and methods of attack. After its manifold conflicts between faith and science, faith has no longer reason to fear. Faith has made many mistakes, but she has never lost her citadel. Whatever science may reveal in respect to the order of God's working, or the records of history, is therefore not dreaded with shivering fear, but is anticipated with cheerful welcome.

*In literature*, and especially in modern literature, is it manifest that Christianity is the minister of cheerfulness and of hope, and that it is the only minister of either. Literature, if it is earnest and true, must recognize all the facts of human experience, the sad as well as the joyous. It cannot overlook the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, which elevate and depress the human soul. It cannot, if it would, avoid the ugly facts of human sinfulness and weakness. By whatever fair name it may call them in its smooth philosophy, or however lightly it may treat them in its frivolous wit or excited glee, passion is too potent in its demoniac energy, and

the debasement of man is too conspicuous, the sense of guilt and fear are too oppressive, the waste and ruin of character are too wide-spread, to fail to be a conspicuous element in any literature, least of all in that of the moderns, least of all in that of the English, whose writers are confessedly earnest and honest and frank. Could sin and guilt be avoided, literature might be cheerful and full of hope. They are avoided to a degree by the Germans, and characteristically by the French. Monsieur Taine, the brilliant historian of English literature, finds the English people inexplicably serious in their conscience of duty, and gravely earnest in their religion toward God. He does not sympathize with these sides of their national character, he does not believe in them, and yet he confesses their elevating effects upon the best English writers. He would fain set them aside by his superficial philosophy of man, and his ill-timed though brilliant frivolity. The fact cannot be avoided, that literature which seeks cheerfulness and hope by ignoring sin and sorrow, or explains them away, makes more conspicuous its sad confessions of their presence and power. That literature alone can be solidly cheerful or joyous which is Christian, as it breaks forth in thanks to Him who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, and finds deliverance for care in the peace of God. The saddest and the most depressing writers of our day are the English writers who are doubtfully Christian or undeniably un-Christian. They may mask their submission to fate with the expression of saintly peace: they may couch their hope in the beneficent laws in phrases borrowed from the lips of the Psalmist who shouts forth his hope in God. They may clothe their promises of triumphant civilization in the words of exalting prophecy, but the spirit of peace and cheerfulness and hope is not theirs. The most

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powerful writer now living of English fiction, and of all, whether living or dead, one of the most wonderful, is known to be most Christian in her longings and associations, and yet un-Christian in her philosophy and her creed. Not a few of her admirers have felt the depression which pervades her writings, even though they are heroic in resolve, and conscientious for duty. A recent friendly critic says most truly what others have thought, though perhaps no other critic has said it so well: "She is a melancholy teacher, — melancholy because sceptical; and her melancholy and scepticism are too apt to degenerate into scorn." We repeat the thought which has been once expressed, — the best modern literature is too thorough and too honest to ignore the fact and the evil of sin. It strives in vain wholly to deny or extenuate its guilt; hence its sadness and gloom. It can furnish no redemption of itself, and hence it bewails man's fate. So far as it accepts none from Christ, so far it exults in no hope, and allows itself little cheerfulness. Its frivolity is too often the wail of despair, its studied and decorous calmness is a constrained submission to fate, its passion is a frenzied defiance or an insane mockery of the God whom it dares not wholly deny.

Christ disciplines to *justness* and *sobriety* of thought. He does this in respect to the independence of science itself. First and foremost he separates truth secular and truth spiritual, by certain definite lines. He teaches most emphatically, "Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's." No other discipline than that of Christ has brought men to acknowledge so fervently that truth has her own rights, and shines by her own light, and that "he who loves Christianity better than truth will end by loving himself better than all." No other master has dared to say, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make

you free," and "if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." It has cost many centuries to adjust the rights of faith and the rights of science. The lesson of the Church on these points may not yet be completely mastered, but the lesson has been taught effectually by Christ. Even at this moment a larger and freer toleration is accorded to atheistic science in Christian circles than to Christian science in atheistic and unbelieving clubs.

Next, the habits of thinking that are formed by Christianity are *clear, solid, and modest*. The recognition of a personal God holds a man to a living and powerful ruler of his thinking. The presence of God's majesty tends to dissipate all pretentious aspirations. The penetrating eye of God reproves all shams of unclear and boastful speculation. The fixed rule of God's eternal reason enforces logic and common sense. On the other hand, the mystery of God's being and of Christ's incarnation elevates and widens thought, and prevents it from becoming flat and commonplace. The worship of the Most High and the humble trust in Christ are incongruous with the sneering frivolity which is the familiar spirit of many modern schools, always ready to use its trampling hoof. The unsounded resources of God's power open to science the widest range for its speculations, the extent of God's purposes furnishes range enough for any series of development; but the force and pressure of his personality reprove the speculative romancing in nature and history which are the weakness of our times, and breed madness in the brain of the man who is not sobered by a mind that is higher than its own. The contrast is very wide between the philosopher who thinks God's thoughts after him, and him who makes his private thinking to give both force and law to the universe.

Christ also fosters *good taste* in literature. His own



words in beauty and force are unsurpassed ; and wherever Genius sits at his feet, she learns to combine sobriety with elevation, clearness with breadth, and good sense with fervor. The forms of literature are always refined by the touch of Christ's finger. The diction is more pure, and the imagery more refined and subtle, the humor is more decorous, and the grace more divine. The many-sided Shakspeare, the solemn Milton, the sad yet merry Cowper, the falling but ever rising Burns, the decorous Scott, the gentle Lamb, the musing Wordsworth, the wide-minded Tennyson, are all examples of the power of Christ to make literature at once steady and clear on the one hand, and soaring and creative on the other. Pantheism may soar indeed, but its flight is limited to the round of a few vague but splendid platitudes. Atheism can only reiterate its scanty vocabulary of unsatisfying negations. The literature of either endures for a brief generation, and dies of its own inanity. The living God alone furnishes new thoughts and new experiences to each new generation of sincere and earnest writers, and the reigning Christ opens new pathways for them in the opening vistas of that Christian civilization which his kingdom will reveal.

3. This leads me to my last thought. Christianity is favorable to culture because it alone furnishes satisfying and exhaustless *inspiration* to the individual man. Science, letters, and art rise or fall with the individual men who produce them. The culture of a generation is the product of the activities of the men who are living, when added to what they inherit from the generations which have gone before. This product in every case is just what the man who creates it makes it to be. The gospel re-creates man in all his capacities, by giving to all the best possible direction, and firing them all by

the noblest objects. Every man who consecrates himself to Christ, consecrates all his powers to him, the best as well as the poorest, the highest as well as the lowest, — the dormant Invention, the unwrought Erudition, the unripened Sentiment, the undeveloped Science, the unspoken Eloquence, the unwritten Poetry, the uncultured Grace, and all in him that with industry and zeal he may produce for the honor of his Master, for the blessing and elevation of others, and for his own joy. If it were not so, then Christ would not deserve the homage and trust of men.

It is true we are not to make culture an end. We may not love science or letters or art more than duty. Life is better than thought; good actions are to be preferred to good speeches; and a poem that is lived out in its passages of love, and its blessed harmonies of peace and good will, is better than all the poetry and music and art which begin and end in selfish enjoyment, and are devoted to baser uses. But knowledge and speech and creative art are themselves the essential consequences of man's consummated redemption from sin, and his culture in holiness. They manifest God's manifold sympathy and his infinite resources; they express Christ's overflowing benediction; they lift us upward to heaven by foreshadowing its pure and hallowed employments.

We not only may pursue them, we ought to pursue them when no higher end of life interposes its claims. To deny this, is to denounce civilization as unchristian, and to do this is to blaspheme Christ. By the same rule, it follows that individual and social culture should be as perfect as is possible, as a Christian duty, so that this be done for the honor of Christ and the welfare of man. These motives are the highest of all. None are so constant, none so efficient, none so ennobling.

They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. The history of Philosophy, of Science, of Erudition, of Literature, of Poetry, and of Art, is rich in names which are not only conspicuous for the splendid achievements of their owners, but which shine with a peculiar lustre, as their achievements were wrought by faith, and hal-  
lowed by prayer, and consecrated with praise. When we count these names, we find that we are indeed compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. The world testifies of these men, that they are its proudest names; and they testify to the world, that they wrought their victories of research and invention by faith. Shall these motives cease to be needed? Can they be dispensed with? Many have often believed this possible, and as uniformly failed, confirming the old words which this new generation may accept and conquer, or abandon and fail: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

It follows from these truths, that Christianity should exert a controlling influence over college and university education. The members of these institutions are men, and as such have need of the same gospel which others require to restrain their passions, to purify their motives, and to give peace and hope to their souls. They are young men with the temptations to which youth are especially exposed. They are young men in a separate community, cut off from the purifying and restraining influences of home and public sentiment, and making for themselves a new family and a separate public opinion. They are in a course of culture; but culture itself has its own moral dangers: and education may lead away

from God, as emphatically and more fatally with its peculiar fascinations, than the grosser and coarser temptations. Christianity is required not only to bless the souls of educated men, but to save culture itself from the degeneracy to which it tends; and for this reason, as our argument has tended to show, its presence should be felt in every college and university. The manhood which is here formed should be Christian manhood. The philosophy, the science, the criticism, the literary tastes, that are taught, should honor Christ in the ways in which all Christian teachers who are of the truth hear Christ's voice. It is not more true that the nation which will not serve God shall utterly perish, because its atheism and passions shall weaken its courage, and eat out its manhood, than that the college which does not honor Christ shall become degenerate, because its faith in truth, its candor, its zeal, its liberality, its education, its sobriety, and, above all, its inspiration, shall be more or less deficient. Such an institution may be warmed and lighted by the fire that other institutions shall watchfully feed and guard, but it will have no warm central fire of its own. That the culture of to-day needs to be more Christian, no one needs to be informed who understands the manifold insecurities and the transparent shams of matter and form; of doctrine and speech, which scientific and literary men not only tolerate, but to some extent glory in. Romancing in science, vagueness in speculation, effrontery in criticism, affectation in literature, are as obvious defects among the so-called men of culture, as are the grosser demoralizations of commercial and political and social life, — which, alas, so many who call themselves Christian and cultured, first denounce, then endure, then practise, and then boast of!

But if culture needs religion, and never more than at

the present, it is equally true that religion needs culture to dignify and enlighten it. The most ardent devotedness to the will of Christ will not teach a man without study the many things which he needs to know, nor will it train him to that capacity of thought and of speech which it is his duty to reach if it is in his power to attain them. There is no more godliness in unculture than there is in squalor. A self-indulgent indolence is the common root of both. Superficial thinking, slovenly writing and speech, extravagant metaphors, pretentious and egotistical declamation, partisan overstatement, one-sided criticism, narrow reading, frivolous literary tastes, Bohemian audacity, are no better in their influence, because they are allowed in the service of religion. They are infinitely worse here than elsewhere, because they are reproved by the prayers and praises which are supposed to sanction, and even to hallow, them. They are all works of darkness with which the child of light should have no fellowship, but should rather reprove them. Culture is the armor of light which the children of light should put on, if they would walk as the children of light. Its polished beauty fitly represents the truth which it would defend, and its oft-proved weapons should be used with such precision and grace as to win the victory without a contest. The man of education is called to the same duties with other men, but there is one class of duties to which he is especially set apart; viz., to adorn his religion by the grace and strength which culture may impart, and to show by his life and influence how greatly that culture which is animated by Christian motives surpasses every other. This duty is especially imperative in a country like ours, in which the tone of public courtesy and of private decorum, the refining of tastes, and the education of manners, are so entirely dependent on the public opinion

which is both the rule and sanction of public and private life, and the only rule and sanction which we know, and which so quickly feels the influence of men of education.

*Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,*—The thoughts which I have presented are ~~not~~ unfamiliar. You recognize them as expressing the principles in which you have been trained. The ideal aspirations described have often been proposed for your realization. You stand together once more in this house of prayer to look back upon the brief period in which you have daily been summoned hither to consecrate your pleasures and work to the honor of the living God in the name, and after the example, of the divine Redeemer. In one respect this period has been long, so varied has it been with exciting incidents, so productive in manifold excitements, so warm with ripening friendships, so swelling and productive with conscious growth, and so hopeful with manly and generous aspirations. It has gone, but not all of it. There are left the achieved discipline, the gathered information, the matured power and grace of expression, and in many, — may we not hope in all? — tastes more refined and elevated, convictions of truth and duty more confirmed, and faith in God and Christ more ardent and enlightened. There also remain the cherished recollections that will ever cleave to this well-remembered and greatly hallowed spot, the manly friendships the bonds of which will never be broken, the tastes and ideals that will bless and adorn your own lives and those of many circles, hopes for this life and the next which are themselves a blessing, some of which can never disappoint you. You have learned something of what culture and education are in the examples of the men whom you have known, and how

good they are when fostered by Christian integrity and consecration. You have had experience of the uncertainty of life, and the frailty of its best possessions and its most refined attractions. In view of all that is past, I invite you to consecrate yourselves anew to a noble, unselfish Christian life, such alone as men of culture can appreciate or conceive.

You cannot but think of the future, and of what it has in store for you. You go forth into activity to encounter special temptations, — temptations to your integrity and to your faith, which you cannot anticipate; temptations which will assail you as men, from power and wealth and pleasure, and temptations which will assail you as men of culture, from the science and letters which are now so bold in their denials, their insinuations, and their sarcasm; temptations which are trebly powerful from the generous and confident enthusiasm, not to say the conceit and affectations, which are the exposures of early manhood.

Would that each one of you could have a just estimate of the dignity, weightiness, and reach of these words of our Lord, "To this end was I born, and to this end came I forth, that I might bear witness to the truth," and resolve to be men of truth in the eminent sense of the word, in your principles and tastes, your ideals and achievements; not only in your life as men, but in your life as men of culture! Would that you could go forth to struggle and overcome in his name, to practise no arts which he does not approve, to give rather than receive, to sacrifice rather than overreach, to devote yourselves supremely to that kingdom which includes all that is good on earth, and all that is blessed in heaven!

Remember that every one who is of the truth heareth Christ's voice, and he who is most fully of the truth hears it most frequently and implicitly. Watch for

that voice, even for its gentlest whisperings, and fear not to follow wherever it leads. He that does this most faithfully on earth, where this kingdom struggles so hard for the mastery, shall hear it sound most sweetly in the fulness and heartiness of that welcome which shall introduce him to that world where this kingdom has the mastery, and Christ is justified and honored as the rightful sovereign. May no one of you fail of that welcome! May many of you, may all, enter that kingdom with distinguished honor!

With these wishes and prayers, I bid you an affectionate farewell.



## V.

### *THE CONQUEST OVER THE WORLD.\**

"WHO IS HE THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD?"—*1 John v. 5.*

THERE is no question that the writer of these words had an intimate personal acquaintance with Jesus when he was on the earth, and that then and subsequently he believed that he was indeed the Son of God. The critics who question whether John wrote the Gospel that bears his name, do not deny that this Epistle was written by the beloved disciple. The writer had accepted Jesus as the promised Deliverer who had died for man's redemption, and was risen again to give effect to his promises. This belief in Christ had wrought in him a new life, giving him power over himself and the evil that assailed him in the world. Faith in the ever-living, ever-loving, and the all-powerful Christ, had made a new man of him in all the springs of his life. He spake from his own experience when he said, "Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." He had also seen the power of this faith on others. For two generations he had observed its influence on thousands who had received it. Our text is the record of his own observation upon other men, coupled with his experience of what he felt in himself. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our

\* *June 22, 1873.*

faith." It was the contrast between what these believers were, and others were not, which led him to add, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

There is, if possible, still less question that, in all the centuries which have followed since this record of John, faith in Jesus as the risen and reigning Son of God has wrought with a similar power over multitudes of believing souls, and given them all in some sort the victory over the world. However much Christianity may have been overloaded or corrupted, its power over those who have received it has come from the faith which it has inspired in Jesus as a person who was entitled to the love and obedience and trust of every living soul. It is not my design to illustrate how great has been the power of this faith, nor how wonderful and unexpected have been the changes which it has wrought in individuals and in communities. All critics and scholars agree in this, that for nearly nineteen centuries faith in Christ as the risen Son of God has wrought as no other faith ever did, to give to man the victory over corruption within and without him.

Whatever men may think of the reasonableness of this faith, no intelligent and earnest student of the past will deny its transcendent power as the one central, and in a sense exclusive, agency which has thus far given to humanity its best conquests over evil.

While all this is conceded, there are many who tell us that faith in Christ in this form must now be abandoned because it has been outgrown. They do not deny its efficiency in the past, nor, in some sense, its necessity. But for the future, they assert, the historic Christ must give place to the ideal Christ,—the objective to the subjective Christ, the personal to the imaginary Christ. This transition must begin with the men of

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science and culture. It has indeed already begun. Faith in the incarnation and miracles must gradually give way to faith in Christ's self-denying and loving life, which has been so consecrated by the evangelic story as to make it forever a symbolic gospel to the conscience, although it must cease to be a gospel of faith to the intellect. The conclusion which they would enforce is this. Men in past ages have overcome the world by faith in the personal and supernatural Christ of history, but in the future they can and must overcome it by faith in the Christ who has at once symbolized and fulfilled the loftiest and lowliest of human perfection.

We hold the opposite. We contend that as in the past, so in the future, the moral power of Christianity lies in faith in Christ as a supernatural and historic person. We offer an argument to prove that the necessity for this faith has not been outgrown, but rather has been made more manifest by the advance of the world in culture and science, and that in the same proportion the evidence has become more convincing that this faith is well grounded.

1. The necessity for this faith has not been outgrown. Rather has it been made more manifest by the advances of the world in culture and science.

(a) I assume that to overcome the world has an intelligible and a real import. It is the ideal which the most thoughtful men have dreamed of and sought after in all ages. The failure to achieve it has been the mystery and the disappointment of the life of many, pre-eminently of those who have grappled with the problem and the duties of life in sober and manly earnestness. To overcome the world is to understand the moral laws which control the universe, and to adjust ourselves to them, that we may conquer them, and wrest from them the hidden blessedness which they have in their gift.

In adjusting himself to these laws, man must first of all overcome himself; and this is his hardest task. His appetites, with their imperiousness and unreason; his inveterate selfishness, whether unblushingly avowed, or successfully disguised to himself; his self-sufficiency, whether it denies and defies God, or makes a God after his own wishes,—all these must be overcome. We assume that this is a most important practical problem for every man to work out. We assume also the truths which this problem implies,—the individual conscience, the eternal law of rectitude, the excellence of human goodness, the fact and evil of human sinfulness, the possible recovery of the fallen and the lost, and the purity and tenderness of the living and loving God. We have no controversy here with those who deny these truths. We place ourselves upon the old-fashioned theism and the old-fashioned conscience as the solid grounds of man's practical convictions. We take the truths which the legislation, the self-respect, the public sentiment, of the world have always assumed, and in which all the higher aspirations and attainments of men find their air and sunlight. Christianity does not undertake to prove these truths. In one sense, it does not make itself responsible for them. It is true, if science can demonstrate that there is no God, and the human conscience is a factitious product or a transient growth, or if literature can charm either or both out of reality by bewitching imagery or high-sounding words, then Christianity must be thrust off or bowed off the stage, because there is no place or occasion for it longer. But if Christianity goes for such reasons, there must go with it duty and all its sacred and joyous train. The bright possibilities and hopes of human goodness must also go, as well as the attending shadows of its remorse and its terror.

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(b) Assuming this to be our problem, and these the truths which underlie it, we ask next, What are the conditions of success? Had John fallen in with Plutarch's "Morals," or with Epictetus' "Handbook," or Antonine's "Meditations," or any other books which are put forth nowadays as containing all that is good in Christianity without its defects, and therefore a supplement to, if not a substitute for, the New Testament, he would doubtless have said, All this is good as far as it goes. I agree with these writers in the main as to what we ought to be and what we are. The difference between us is, that I believe in a person who moves me to love, and helps me to achieve, that which is good, who inclines me to hate and repent of that which is evil, who orders my life in a way favorable to my perfect victory, and who commends to me a life of goodness, as a service of gratitude for what he has done and will do for my complete conquest. That is what the apostle would have said. We are to show that what John would have said in his day is as true and as pertinent in our day as it was then.

(c) The world is a scene of struggle. What we insist on is, that the occasion for help of some sort has in no sense been removed, but, if possible, is greater than ever before. With all that science can do to discover the means of good, or that art can combine to apply them, or letters can imagine for solace or elevation, life is as truly a conflict from the beginning to the end, as it has been from the first. The world is filled with disappointments. Culture refines our sensibilities, and enlarges our capacities for happiness; but neither physical nor social science has yet learned how to keep pace with the enlarged cravings of man's heart, — still less how to adjust the conflicts within and without, that must bring bitter and passionate disappointment; all the

more keen because disappointment is often stung with the sense of real or fancied wrong.

The world still abounds in temptation. The youth goes forth to the untried scene to play the game — how often a losing game! — on which he has staked the life of his soul, strong in manly self-reliance and virtuous resolve. The man mature in experience, and environed with public respect, thinks himself proof against dishonor. But passion awakes with unsuspected energy, and temptation is disguised as an angel of light. The man falls, oh, how often! and rots in infamy, or curses the day of his birth. The discoveries of science, the appliances of art, the blandishments of literature, the opportunities of artificial life, increase a thousand-fold the danger to honor and integrity, and many a strong man falls in the high noon of his strength and honor.

Sin and guilt renew their death in life, their sentence of condemnation and despair. The household and the heart, the market-place and the forum, are embittered with their hatreds, and polluted by their shame. Ungoverned passion and fiendish hatred are none the less foul or miserable because of the carpets on which men tread, or the luxurious tastes with which they consort. The strifes of science are sometimes as bitter as the brawlings of the fish-market, and the jealousies and envyings of literature are none the less mean and unworthy because their speech is exquisitely refined. The sting of remorse is none the less keen in the enlightened and cultured soul; for none can see so clearly, or feel so sensitively, as such a soul, the evil of abused opportunities, or the guilt of inexcusable perversion. The sense of weakness in these struggles increases rather than diminishes as the breadth and height of our ideal are enlarged by reflective insight, and as culture makes us more sensitive to the danger and the evil of failure.

Sorrow still lives. The bitter draught, which she forces every man to drink, is none the less bitter because it is served in costly goblets wrought with exquisite art. It does not soften our bereavement to know that the spirit of the friend from whom we are parted was tuned to the finest issues, or that wealth and honor and culture are at our service, with such consolations as they can give. What does it avail to the man bereft of the friend who is a part of his life, or to him who is struck down by sudden misfortune, to know that the lost one was one of the fairest and loveliest of earth, or that his misfortune has robbed him of blessings such as no previous generation could purchase with its money or its fame?

The certainty of death is not abated, its darkness and horror are not diminished, because life is more joyous than ever, and the appliances for comfort and culture and taste are increased as never before, and brought within the reach of greater numbers. The heir of an ample estate, with culture and honor and power, sits in his elegant and well-filled library, and looks out upon his lovely grounds. He hears the muffled voices of loving and cultured friends suppressing the song and jest for his sake. He broods over *what* and *whom* he must leave. Is it any the less, or is it the more bitter, for such a man to die, than for one who has less to leave, or who has been cultured to care for it less?

Nor is it alone in the darker and struggling hours of life that the world needs the light and strength of faith. The gay need to be sober, that they may be steady and strong. The successful need to learn lessons of self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice, of modesty and condescension. The self-reliant need to be saved from that pride which now is inflated to foolish emptiness, or hardened to cruel haughtiness. Science needs to be reminded

that its knowledge is limited by infinitude; the imagination needs to be irradiated by a heavenly light, that it may be truly refined; and culture to be taught that art and letters are the adornments, and not the ends, of life.

I add as another reason, —

(d) The proposed substitutes for the old faith are insufficient to insure the victory over the world. The first we name are education in its widest and most elevated meaning, — education in the family, the school, and the university, by society, by amusements, and by science, literature, and art; the development of industrial and economic science; the perfection of political economy; the science of government; the reconstruction of the political and social fabric, and the administration of industry, finance, and government on scientific principles; the elevation of the tastes by letters and manners, amusements and the arts; and, last of all, the refinement of ethical and religious ideals, till they shall rise above the purity, the unselfishness, and the spirituality of Christ, the Christian Scriptures, and the Christian Church. These proposed substitutes can only be efficient to overcome the world in two ways, — as they *teach*, and as they *train*. Every influence which we have named, and every imaginable appliance, must either *instruct* or *inspire*. But whether it trains or inspires, it must bring into the field some personal force, which attracts by example, awes by authority, wins by sympathy, or captivates by love. Example, authority, sympathy, love, are abstract terms for living persons, each of which is a centre of personal force. Without living persons, themselves inspired and controlled, and thus inspiring and controlling others, science and culture can accomplish little. Without faith and love, education fails to do its best work in the family and the school. Education in the university, administered in the spirit



of a hireling's greed for gain or reputation or power, fills society with accomplished and dexterous lovers of themselves. Political, legal, and social science, if mastered by those who care not for the public good, can make an educated legislature a den of thieves, and a bench of justice a place where justice is more skilfully and learnedly betrayed, and every junto of politicians dangerous in proportion to their mastery of political science. The scientific knowledge of finance and exchange may be used to convulse the moneyed centres of the world, as with the panic of an earthquake. What is it that at this moment fills the most thoughtful men in this country, who are not alarmists, with serious, if not distinctly expressed, disquietude? Is it not the inefficiency of public sentiment in a country filled with newspapers and schools and books and literature, and schools of science and of letters? And what is this defect of public sentiment but a brief phrase for the want of courage or the want of self-sacrifice in the men who form and energize public opinion, — the lawyers, the bankers, the capitalists, the merchants, the editors, the influential men and women in the cities, villages, and hamlets in all parts of our well-instructed and wakeful country? We say of ourselves truly that we are moved by ideas, and this is true; but what we want most of all, is men who have faith and courage to enforce their convictions.

There are those who, like Matthew Arnold, dream that the study of morals and religion in their subjective or ideal perfection will awaken this personal energy, which will be strong enough to overcome the world, — that the study of the manhood of the old and new Scriptures will give us a new generation of men. They would substitute the study of goodness for faith in God, and the idealization of Christian virtue for trust in the

living Christ. They blame religious teachers, that they give prominence to the doctrine of the personal and the living God, and insist on a personal faith in a divine Redeemer, instead of dwelling on the excellence of a pure heart, and setting forth the unselfish love and sympathy of the Christian spirit. They formally repudiate the personality of God, in exchange for what they call a stream of tendency or the beneficent laws, and would displace the living and loving Christ by an ideal picture of an ideal Christian, with no Christ to inspire and save him. As if the study of religion could make a man religious, who has no God to honor and worship! and the contemplation of love to man or to God, could make a man love, without some person to love and to die for, who is worthy such a sacrifice! They forget that subjective science, even of the purest ethics or the loveliest ideals, is as impotent as are the objective science of politics and history, to achieve the victory over the world, however eloquently either is expounded, or brilliantly it may be adorned. The failure of these impersonal substitutes to do their work prepares us to see that a personal God, manifested clearly and variously and movingly to man, is the only agency by which he can overcome the world. If personal force is the highest and the indispensable agency for help and victory, and if God has been present in man's history, then faith in a present and personal God is alone adequate to man's needs.

We have seen already that what the culture and science of to-day are waiting for and longing for is manhood — the manhood of living men, to command respect and win affection, to illustrate science, to exemplify culture, to apply political and social principles, to embody truth in institutions and wholesome laws, and, when these exist, to enforce them, by a courage that

will never flinch, a disinterestedness that cannot be bought, a patience that is never wearied, and a love that never fails to subdue and win. To train and inspire men to all this, some master spirit is wanted.

What means the almost universal and almost abject faith of so many scientists and philosophers in a mighty despot, the expected Messiah of the New Era, who can enforce the principles of health and education and sociology, who can endow colleges and schools of study, and build palaces of art? What does all this mean, except the implicit confession, that man, to overcome the world, must obey and believe in a person, — if not in the Son of God, then in a Cæsar — whether one or many headed, it is the same. What means the frantic cry from so many of our prophets of literature for some hero, who shall be worthy of their homage, and the readiness with which, of the devotees of letters, each accepts some hero for his worship, except that man is more aware at this present moment than ever before, that what each individual needs, and what society needs, is belief in, and control by, a person who is worthy supreme confidence and honor?

Faith in the love of God finds and accepts such a person. That he should command man's respect, he must master the mystery of man's being, and be present in the inmost recesses of man's spirit. He must grasp all the possibilities of science in the reach of his knowledge, and sympathize with all the refinements of culture. He must be wiser than the wisest of men, and more powerful than all earthly potentates. He must stoop to an act of condescension which surpasses all human analogies, and commend his loving pity by acts that cannot but move and sway the heart.

(e) That man may reach this being by his limited capacities, he must come to man under human limitations:

that man should not be able to mistake or distrust his goodness, God addresses his human affections through the human nature to which he stoops. Is man oppressed by a sense of guilt and fear? Christ has died that he might be forgiven. Is he weak under temptation? He was tempted in all points like as we are, that he might succor those who are tempted. Does sorrow enter man's dwelling, and rend his heart? A voice whispers in the chamber of sickness and the house of death, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Is life short and uncertain? The voice is heard again: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Are the possessions and hopes of this life vain and worthless? The least thing done or gained in Christ's memory and for his kingdom can never be lost. The cup of cold water, the humblest gift, the feeblest effort, all these are gathered into the treasury that never fails.

It is an old story; but it is always new to the man who makes it new, by applying it freshly to his personal needs. We have heard it a thousand times, in what have seemed to us empty declamations, tiresome sermons, or formal prayers; but when a man learns his need of this personal Christ, in some experience of his life, whether it be for the first or the thousandth time, it is as though the glad tidings of great joy were heralded and heard for the first time on the plains of Bethlehem, or the shout that greeted the ascending Son of God had not ceased to echo in the heavens.

The necessity for the use of it cannot be outgrown, as long as groping souls shall seek after God, if so be that they may find him; or sinful souls shall long for the assurance that they are forgiven; or tempted and struggling souls shall need help in their conflicts; or suffering souls shall crave for sympathy; or strong and young

men, and weak and frail women, and tender and fearsome children, shall confront death, and bend broken-hearted over the grave.

It is not wonderful that those who deny the necessity of this faith to man, are driven by the force of an inexorable logic to deny or doubt these fundamental truths. We have assumed these truths in our argument, and urge that those who believe in overcoming the world must accept our conclusion, that for all such there is no substitute for the faith that Jesus is the Son of God. Our argument does not require us to notice those who doubt or faintly receive these fundamental truths, and consequently give a vacillating and hesitating consent to our conclusion. That there are many such in cultivated and Christian assemblies, we are forced to believe. One can with difficulty credit what we are compelled to know, that Epicurean Atheism has of late made enormous strides on the most slender evidence under the guise of Natural History, and a pretentious Pantheism has done the same under the imagined necessities of Physical order and Metaphysical completeness, while Critical Rationalism teaches the same in the form of Historic Impartiality. These tendencies are not alarming to Christianity alone. They threaten all that is sacred and permanent in our human as truly as all that we hope or fear in our eternal life. The dignity of character, the sacredness of truth, the stainlessness of honor, the faithfulness of affection, and the generosity of self-denial, must all give way, if the living God is to be abandoned at the suggestions of the last-discovered fossil, if conscience is to be denied at the last word of physiology or metaphysics, or if Christ is to walk out of human history at the bidding of the last brilliant critic. Not only must our human virtues go, by the application of an inexorable logic, but there may also

depart the protection of our honor, the security of our property, and the sacredness of our libraries and museums, and even the sustenance and honor of science itself. It would be a not unjust nor an impossible retribution, were some of these extemporized theories which are so eagerly caught up and propounded by scientists and *littérateurs*, to be applied to the destruction of the museums along whose shelves are written in lines of development there is no God, and from whose piles of fossils and crania there leaps forth the irresistible demonstration, the soul is a function of the brain which sleeps in death. If history and criticism are to flaunt similar conclusions before the people, in mystic speech and imposing imagery, it may be that the half-taught demagogue shall turn these lessons to a practical application, as he incites the crazed populace to destroy the sacred treasures of history, and to deface the priceless collections of art. That such a Nemesis would be just, no reasoner would deny; that it is impossible, no student of history would assert; that it is to be feared, he will not allow. Fearfully as faith in the living God and the personal Christ has been shaken, we will believe that it has reached its lowest point of doubt or denial. This leads me to observe, that the evidence that this faith is grounded in an historic and eternal fact becomes more and more convincing with the advance of culture and science. I do not assert that it will convince every one. It has never promised to do this. The careless and the self-reliant, the passionate and the proud, will of necessity turn away from it, and reject it. They will, doubtless, find new reasons for doing so, with the changing aspects of science and culture. But science and culture will not be in fault for this, so long as with their development and advance they shall furnish new and stronger testimony to the historic verity and the

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eternal authority of the incarnate and exalted Son of God. We insist that culture and science, the more they are perfected, the better will they enable men to appreciate the transcendent attractions of the supernatural Christ. The more culture is refined, the more sensitive does it become to the indescribable charms of Christ's sayings and life. The more scientifically man is studied, the more wonderful does this one Son of man appear; the more history is compared and mastered, the more unique is the story of Christ's life; the more carefully the science of human society is thought of, whether it concerns the neighborhood of man to man, or of nation to nation, the more sagacious and comprehensive is Christ's wisdom. Nothing is more significant of this progressive advance in the best thought of the ages than the loud and fervent homage of many of the cultivated men of later ages to this unmatched character. Whatever else has been lost to the argument for supernatural Christianity, has been more than replaced by the gain in the unanimity and ardor of this unquestioning homage. To the culture and science of the older times, Christ was an offence and a deceit. The best philosophers and critics of our times either vie with one another in extolling the charm of his words and the beauty of his life, or with stealthy tread, drooping eyelids, and hand upon the lips, retire silently from his presence. "The greatest of all heroes," said Carlyle, "is one whom we do not name." "Let sacred silence meditate that sacred matter." Nothing is more significant, and to a wise forecast more hopeful, than the fact, that the ideal Christ is more and more honored by the refined sensibility of our best literature, and the sagacious insight of our profoundest science. I observe, next,—

The æsthetic and scientific interest excited by Christ is justified by, as it tends itself to justify faith in, his

historic and supernatural reality. Admiration tends to worship: scientific wonder is heightened by faith in reality. If Christ be "the brightness of the Father's glory," and "the express image of his person," then it is fit that we should be more than dazed by the matchless charm of his character, and the strange mystery of his personality, but that the historic truth of his incarnation should heighten our æsthetic delight in his person and his history. Culture and science cannot be hostile to that conviction which harmonizes with both. Conversely, the only solution to the ideal attractions of Christ's person is found in his historic truth. While culture refines man to the capacity of appreciating Christ's ideal excellence, scientific thought demands an explanation for this singular phenomenon. As men become more sensitively alive to the beauty and strangeness of this wonder of their kind, the more strongly are they incited to explain its mystery. The higher is their admiration for its singular excellence, and the deeper their amazement at its strange complexness, the more readily will they be brought to accept the one possible solution that lies in its sober and historic truth. The solution may be itself a mystery, but it is one with the mystery which is already accepted by that theism which the highest culture and the deepest science both require. So that the old alternative comes back, — if there be a living God, and man has a responsible soul, then this God has become incarnate.

Again: culture and science are ever making new experiences of the unsatisfactoriness of false solutions of the person of Christ. There has never been a time since Christ has appeared which has been so fruitful in these solutions as the last fifty years. Never have men of high culture and searching science so often propounded the question to one another, and so often an-



swered it, "What think ye of Christ?" Never has it been answered so variously by theories which contradict one another so entirely. Christ is at this moment the sphinx which attracts to itself by its mystery the speculative wonder of the most highly and honestly cultured of the race. It holds them as if it would compel an answer with which they shall be content. It will compel an answer. The question with which it poses the world will never be at rest till it is answered by the faith of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Men are not only more sensitive than ever to the charm and mystery of Christ's person, but they are more alive to his actual power. The wider is their reading, and the more catholic and appreciative their tastes, the more alive are they to the place which the name of Christ has gained in the hearts of men, and the wonderful changes which he has wrought in human thought and feeling. I do not allude to the quantity nor the duration of these effects, but to their quality and intensity. These alone are miracles which require to be explained. These can only be accounted for by faith in those very claims, faith in which has wrought such moral and spiritual achievements as in those outward relations which we call Christian civilization, and those inward victories which we call Christian virtue. These advances in culture and insight will bring the world sooner or later to find in the historic energy of this faith a more and more potent argument for its truth.

The real difficulties of faith are not increased by modern culture and science. That there are difficulties or trials to faith, we do not deny. That in one sense these always must be, we concede. Faith would cease to be faith could it be demonstrated by the syllogistic processes, or verified by experiments of induction. But

what, if it be true, that, as men live a little longer, they shall discover that all that men believe in is not bounded by the finite. That faith is less reasonable now than in other times, or that it is called to contend with greater difficulties, we deny. Not a single new difficulty is found in principle, however novel many are in form. Science has to do with larger spaces than formerly, and with longer times. It peoples these spaces with manifold objects, with the vast and the minute; and it stretches along the ages a multitude of events and beings in orderly development and beautiful symmetry. In one sense, God is pushed farther off from the soul of man by these unmeasured spaces and these indefinite prolongations of time. But unity and law and thought were never so emphasized as now by the necessities of science, and these all bring God very near; and goodness and tender care were never by its revelations brought so warmly to the heart. The vastness and mystery of the universe exalt rather than depress the importance of the individual men, who master this increase by their intellect, and wonder and worship with their hearts. That God never ceases to think of man, is proved by every step that science takes in the world without: that God should visit man, is rendered more probable by every look which science bestows on the soul within. Every need of the soul cries out for the manifestation of God, and makes it more probable, because it is seen to be more and more necessary that God should stoop to the weakness of the creatures whom he has made capable of such dignity as to know and commune with himself. The heart that longs for the living God, who is higher and better than his works, could never find so many arguments as now, from its culture and its reading, because God was never so manifest before.

Finally, the factitious difficulties in the way of faith

promise to be rapidly removed by the progress of culture. Difficulties from a want of the historic sense, from an extravagant theory of inspiration, from the dry and scholastic phraseology of creeds and confessions, from narrow views of the Christian ethics, from a want of sympathy with art and literature, — these, and many more which might be named, are fast giving way before the Christian culture and science of these times. While, on the one hand, there was never a time in which it was so easy for a man who is so inclined to deny Christ, or to doubt of God, and never so easy to find books and men in abundance to give their countenance and sympathy, it is true, on the other hand, that faith in the Son of God was never so rational or so attractive as now. It would seem as though no possible excuses could be left for unbelief, except such as the unbelieving heart would suggest and enforce.

Should all occasion for this class of difficulties cease to exist, Christ would be worth no man's confidence. He came to us that he might teach and aid us to overcome the world; i.e., to overcome the self-reliance and selfishness that make us unwilling to trust in him. This being done, all else is done. If a man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

*Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,* — To you who are about to leave this scene of discipline, and to try the world single-handed, these truths have a special interest. You are beginning to feel, if never before, that the world is not a place for enjoyment alone, or for quiet preparation, but that it also is an arena for conflict and struggle, and that its conflicts and struggles largely relate to what you are, as well as to what you will gain. The experience of breaking away from this frequented spot, forcibly reminds you that the world for you is no

longer to be a place for holidays, but that life involves loss and separation and loneliness, with labor and disappointment and temptation. Your life while you have been together, though more than usually sunny and bright, has not been void of such lessons. There have been many things for you to bear and to overcome, while you have been coming and going to this familiar place. Day after day has brought the enforced obligation to labor. Temptation has lain in wait for you with artful addresses for each. Sorrow and disappointment have visited every heart. Death has twice come in upon you with his resistless call.

I need not remind you that a world in which there was nothing to overcome, would be scarcely worth living in; that no man should expect or desire to be exempt from toil and conflict. Nor need I urge any further that it is neither manly nor wise to forget the unequal conditions under which every man of us prosecutes the conflict of life, and the need of the guidance and the inspiration which Christ alone can minister. The science which has widened your knowledge, and the culture which has ripened your sensibilities, have simply enlarged your capacity to measure more justly, and to feel more sensitively, the necessity for this help. Would that from this hour, faith in the Son of God might take complete possession of each one of your hearts! Should it fail to do so now, then there will not fail to come to you hours of loneliness and weakness and sorrow, in which the Son of God will be your only adequate comfort and strength; hours of struggle and darkness in which he alone can give you guidance and light; hours of guilt and fear, in which he alone can give you pardon and hope.

You go forth into a world in which just at this moment faith in the Son of God may not be intense

and aggressive, into a world in which many scientists find no occasion for a personal God : many critics and men of culture overlook, or flippantly dispose of, the greatest miracle which human history has ever encountered. You go into a world in which atheistic theories are accepted with scarce a thought of their import, and anti-Christian suggestions are adopted on a half-hour's reading of a brilliant essay.

While the world is in this condition, your faith in the Son of God may often be tried. It must be intelligent and thoughtful if it is to be zealous and strong. This condition of the world should inspire renewed energy and boldness in each one of you. It is my belief, that, out of these present conflicts, there is speedily to come forth such a manifestation of the majesty and the love of the ever-living Son of God, to every earnest seeker for the truth, as shall more than satisfy their questionings, and shall give a new impulse to their zeal. The lines cannot be drawn too sharply or too soon. We care not how soon the time shall come, when theist and atheist shall each avow his faith or his no faith,—when the believer and the unbeliever shall understand what each accepts and denies,—provided that in this way the powers of the world to come shall take more complete possession of the hearts and the lives of those who believe.

Whatever form this conflict may assume in your generation, and to whatever issues it may lead, may it be your happy lot to overcome the world by a faith worthy the name, and thus to lay hold of eternal life! May that life be yours in large measure by blessed anticipations and more glorious realizations! These are the best wishes which I can offer for your welfare; and with these, and the warmest desires for your good, I bid you farewell.

## VI.

### *OBEDIENCE THE CONDITION OF KNOWLEDGE.\**

**"IF ANY MAN WILL DO HIS WILL, HE SHALL KNOW OF THE DOCTRINE  
WHETHER IT BE OF GOD."—*John vii. 17.***

CHRISTIANITY, as we find it in the New Testament, assumes two attitudes, which at first thought seem to be inconsistent and antagonistic. It submits itself to be tried and judged, and by simple evidence, asking no confidence which it does not justify. Again, it assumes to try and judge every living man to whom it comes; commanding him on his allegiance to accept its message, and to follow its Lord. So far as it appeals to the reason, it asks no favors. So far as it appeals to the conscience, it assumes supreme authority over every man who hears its voice.

It would seem at first sight, that here is a contradiction. Many expounders of Christianity have sought to intensify this difficulty by emphasizing what they choose to call the necessary antagonism between reason and faith. But this seeming disappears when we reflect that the reason which listens to evidence, and waits for a verdict, is but another name for the conscience, when it demands instant and unquestioning obedience, when it admits no excuses, and permits no delay.

We notice also, that Christianity has from the very

\* *June 21, 1874.*

first assumed both these attitudes ; submitting itself on the one hand to the critical judgment of men, and commanding them on the other hand to believe and obey. The modern assailants of Christianity fall into an oversight when they assume that it came into the world without being challenged. They forget that it was confronted at the very beginning with sharp-sighted critics. They overlook what the New Testament distinctly records, — that its claims were disputed by almost every conceivable description of antagonists ; that its facts were denied, its principles were questioned, its miracles were referred to causes generally accredited as natural and common, and that the claims of its founder to be divinely commissioned were set aside as offensive by a great variety of representative men. If its new assailants would read its old history with a more critical spirit, they would find it fighting its way step by step with the weapons of simple truth. If they would study more closely the grounds on which it was rejected in the first century, they would discover that they are similar in principle to those on which it is rejected in the nineteenth ; that it is only in form that these difficulties have changed, while their substance remains. The Greeks adored culture, — grace and beauty in art, comprehensiveness and insight in science, skill and forecast in commerce, sagacity and conquest in statesmanship. They were so occupied and delighted with this life, that they did not concern themselves greatly with another ; they failed to find out the fact and evil of sin, and hence they could find no reason for Christianity, and consequently no reason in it. To them it was foolishness. The Jews were so occupied with the power and isolation of the Most High, and his majestic incomprehensibleness and distance, they were so elevated with their own position as the select nation who alone could

understand God, that a Christ who was condescending and pitiful and self-sacrificing; a Christ who cared for dishonest publicans, and vulgar harlots, and the accursed common people, and cared for them so much as to expend upon them his life and death that he might bring them into his kingdom; and, more than all, a Christ whose life and death emphasized human guilt and weakness, — was, to their ways of thinking, simply a scandal and a stumbling block. Against these rejecters and antagonists, Christianity offered reasons for being received as the wisdom and the power of God. It quietly and earnestly asked men to think of the occasion for its revelations, and the evidence by which it was supported. It stood quietly before the bar of its judge, declaring in the person of its Lord, "To this end came I forth, that I might bear witness of the truth;" while yet in the same breath it rose into the majestic confidence of command, adding, "Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice."

Christ goes farther than this. He tells every man who is not yet convinced of his claims, how he may become satisfied of their truth and authority. He does not bid him to cease to think or to inquire. He does not bid him not to use his reason, but to use it more persistently and earnestly than ever before. But at the same time he tells him that it is essential to his success that he should enter at once upon the practice of duty, assuring him that if he will do this, he will be convinced that Christ is from God. These words are not merely words of advice or of command. They are blessed words of promise and encouragement to every soul that in this questioning and unsettled age seeks to know what and whom to believe. To the obstinate and the froward only, they are words of authority and reproof: to the honest inquirer, they are words of sympathy.



Let us follow them as closely as we may, in order that we may understand their meaning, so as to use them aright.

“*If a man will do his will, he shall know.*” These words comprise a condition and a promise. Let us *first* consider the condition, and ask what is its import. What does Christ intend in sober earnestness when this direction is divested of theological or traditional phraseology, and translated for the use of living men?

We answer, each man is to begin with what he himself owns to be his duty — with this and nothing more. We repeat and emphasize this, because it is not always insisted on. Some spiritual advisers deny it altogether, or so mystify their directions as to send away the inquirer after guidance in greater uncertainty and despair. Some interpret it thus: It is the will of God that you believe that Christ is his messenger and representative: if now you will exercise this faith, you will know that your faith is well grounded. But this is logically and practically absurd and impossible. To a man who has no difficulties, and is already a believer, it may seem to be satisfactory; but to a man whose doubts and inquiries are real, it is an insult to his understanding, and a mockery of his pain. We cannot believe this to have been the meaning of the wise and loving Christ, who knew so completely what was in man, and what was fitted for man. We are confident that though he never used the formulæ of the schools, he would never reason in a logical circle with a diameter so short as this. But what Christ says to every man is this: *There is something which you believe to be your duty; begin with that, and do it.*

The inquirer might still urge, duty is as uncertain as truth. Men are as divided upon the question, *What is duty?* as they are upon the question, *What is truth?* in-

deed, propositions of duty are in effect propositions of truth. It may be so, and yet it still may be true, that each individual man owns certain duties to be sacredly binding upon himself. This we may assume until some one is found who is bold enough to deny it. With this each man is to begin, and this he is to turn into reality. He may be mistaken in his judgment; but whatever his judgment may be, he must be willing to translate it into action.

Next, the inquirer must do this with respect to *every thing* which he owns as duty. Duty admits no exemption or excuses. If it imposes one command, it imposes another, and all, and by the same authority. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." This is not merely a dictum of Scripture, but it is an axiom in ethics. The spirit of duty is that of entire and comprehensive obedience. In the eyes of the earnest conscience, all duties are alike sacred and important.

It scarcely need be added that duties of thought and feeling are included as truly as duties of word and action. In the view of conscience, all duties are duties of the inner man, and of the inner man alone. It is the spirit and purpose which make the word or action right or wrong. The voice of Christ may seem very harsh to a young or old man, when it bids him from this moment to subject his thoughts and motives to the law of duty. But this voice is none other than the voice of his own soul, — the command which he imposes on himself.

It is the *purpose*, however, and not the achievement, which Christ requires. Christ does not say a man must first attain moral perfection before he can be convinced of the truth. If he had said this, his word would have been any thing but a gospel. Had Christ told the sensual reeking in their lusts, the malignant festering with

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passion, and the unbelieving stiff in their pride, that they each must go through a long course of purification from their besetting sins, before they could know that he was indeed the Christ, he would have made it impossible that he should ever be a Christ to them. That for which men need a Christ, is that he may help them overcome their sins. It would be a mockery of their need to tell them that they must first of all be rid of their sins before they could judge whom to trust as a Saviour from the same.

Christ exacts no such conditions. While he rigidly requires the purpose of duty, as the law of the inner man, he never requires that achievement should be complete. He does not even wait for any achievement at all. In this, the rigor and the gentleness of Christ are both illustrated,—the rigor which requires the subjection of the will in an earnest purpose, and the gentleness which excuses ten thousand imperfections.

Again, the spirit in which this law of duty is accepted must be uncompromising. Duty must be enthroned above all rivals, and for the whole of the soul's future existence. The purpose of duty must be ready for any sacrifice. The right hand must be cut off, the right eye must be plucked out. Father and mother, and wife and children, must be abandoned at its call. The whole of one's future being must be given up to its rule. The occupation of the future life must be a service and sacrifice at its altar.

Finally, duty must be served in a religious spirit. The words of Christ are, "If a man will do *his* will;" i.e., the will of God. These words imply that a man believes there is a God who enforces duty as his will. It would seem to follow that no atheist, let him be ever so conscientious and truth-loving, could comply with this condition. We need not trouble ourselves with such a

question. It is clear that no man can comply with it who follows duty in an irreligious spirit; that is, in a conceited, unteachable, or self-relying temper. Duty may be performed in a godless spirit. A man may be so confident that he knows and does his whole duty, as to be unwilling to be taught any thing by any body. He may be so wise in his knowledge of what he ought to be, and so confident that he is perfect in his purposes and performances, as to refuse to ask help from any being higher and better than himself. There have been schools and individuals who have made out of duty an idol for self-worship, and in the very name of duty have rejected God.

For this reason it is important to add, that duty must be obeyed and loved in a religious spirit, as contrasted with the spirit of the Stoic or the Pharisee. Whether a man believes in God, or seeks after God, he must cherish an unselfish, a humble, and a reverent spirit. Whether he has found God or not, he must have a temper which longs to believe there is a God whom he may love and worship and trust. His soul must not only be willing that God should exist and reign in the interests of holiness, — he must long with an irrepresible desire that the universe may be blessed with the brightness of his unsullied purity, and that the wronged and oppressed and comfortless may have one sure refuge to which to flee, while the faithful rejoice in him as their strong and present helper.

The religious spirit is devout and prayerful. The man who is willing to do the will of God, must be a man of prayer. Whether he believes there is a God or no, he must stretch out his hands, and lift up his voice, in entreaty that God would make himself manifest, if he exists indeed. He cannot but be grateful even to an unseen and unknown source of blessing, if

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he only surmises that such a being exists. If he is conscious of exposure to error or sin or weakness, he will naturally and necessarily cry out for God from the depths of his soul, "*Oh, that I knew where I might find him!*"

This is the condition. Let us, *second*, consider the promise, "*He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*" In other words, supreme consecration to duty is the one effectual way to be assured that Christ, and Christ's teachings, are from God. This promise is made by Christ on many occasions. It is repeated in manifold phraseology. That it should be uttered so often, and with such confidence, by a teacher like Christ, in the face of critics so severe, and enemies so violent, and in defence of a system in many respects so weak, shows a marvellous confidence in the resources of the system itself. Earnest men do not usually talk at random in such a strain, especially if they seek to teach and guide earnest men. Two methods are conceivable in which this promise might be fulfilled; viz., by *supernatural influence* and *natural consequence*. Christ may have intended to say, that if a man earnestly and perseveringly makes duty to God his supreme aim, God will meet him, and manifest himself to him in some extraordinary or supernatural manner; or, on the other hand, that the consecration of the soul to duty is the appropriate and necessary condition to a settled Christian faith.

The one of these does not exclude the other. The first *may be* true, even if the second *must be* true. It is to the *natural and necessary connection* between consecration to duty and a settled faith that I would especially invite your attention. Among the reasons why devotion to duty is a condition of faith, are the following:—

1. Devotion to duty holds the attention to the evi-

dence that Christ is from God. Granting that faith is always founded on evidence, devotion to duty in the way described may be essential to faith, because nothing else will fix and fasten the attention upon the grounds for believing. Truth of any kind to be assented to, must be attended to. The truths of astronomy had for ages looked down upon man from the stars. The truths of geology had, from the beginning, looked up to man from the earth. Truth of optics had been reflected from every dewdrop, and sparkled in every beam of light. The truths of statesmanship and political economy had been illustrated in the great and small events of social experience. The truths of geometry and algebra had always been within man's reach, and, as it were, been longing and struggling to be assented to by some discerning mind. But for want of the attending mind, all these gained neither assent nor conviction. What is true of what we call the mind of the race, is true of each individual. Indeed, truth that has once been apprehended, is only retained for the race by the renewed attention and the ever-renewed assent of individual minds. We need not go to truths of science and scientific progress for our illustrations. What is color to those who can not or will not look? What is sound to those who can not or will not listen?

The evidence that Christ is from God, is very largely evidence founded on the fact and the relations of duty. It is with these that Christianity is mainly concerned; and it is upon its import with respect to duty, that the conviction must rest that Christianity is from God. Christianity is not a philosophy or a metaphysics, it is not a science of the natural or the supernatural, although its truth may involve and imply these and other sciences. It is not merely an historical phenomenon. It does not stand or fall by learned or literary criticism,

although its trustworthiness involves historical and critical researches. It is a revelation of a person for ends of moral blessing and recovery. Its credentials are to be found in man's desperate need of such intervention in his impotence to deliver himself, and in the completeness of Christ for this work. Concerning questions like these, every man is competent to judge and decide. But, in order to judge, every man must attend to the facts.

An earnest purpose to do the will of God, commits a man henceforward to attend to the fact and relations of duty as an ever-present reality. Duty brings and holds the mind to its presence as a commanding interest, and so far enables it to judge of all that evidence which has any concern with duty. Without this purpose formed and acted on, I need not say that a man is tempted not to attend to duty; and to him the arguments which derive their force from duty, will be like the proofs of astronomical or geological or mathematical science to the mind that does not ask whether the facts and forces are true, or like the pomp of color and the harmonies of sound to the man who can neither see nor hear.

2. Consecration to duty also trains a man vividly to apprehend, and sensitively to appreciate, the *significance* of the evidence to which he attends. If arguments are to convince, they must not only be thought of, but they must be responded to by a sensitive spirit. Arguments are weighed, not numbered. To the sensitive observation of some strongly interested soul, almost every important discovery is to be ascribed. Necessity is the mother of invention because it sharpens the wits to discern and judge. The hunter who studies the habits of his game, the savage who reads the history of yesterday in the trail of the forest, the gifted scientist who

alone interprets a hint of nature that had been repeated myriads of millions of times before, the inventor who follows out some chance experiment to the construction of some wonder-working engine, — are all sensitively alive to what they judge of; and they owe to their interest in what they think of, their power to judge rightly. In matters of taste and tact and sagacity, sensibility is the condition of quick and sure discernment. The intuitive judgment of women on points of practice rests on their more refined sensitiveness.

The purpose of duty awakens in the soul a class of emotions which in their nature are the most sacred and refined. As soon as they have leave to exist, they quicken the mind to manifold new discernments. The ends of human aspiration, the judgments of what one should care for and live for, are viewed under entirely new lights. Dead and meaningless truisms start into being as active and living powers. Manifold thoughts and facts suggest God as present, and needed by man, and Christ as attractive and divine. Sorrow and joy, success and failure in life, are estimated chiefly with respect to their bearing on character. The standards and estimates of any man who begins to live for duty are all newly adjusted, and charged with an electric sensitiveness.

His intellect has not changed in its sobriety or its solidness. His reason is still amenable to evidence, and to evidence only. His purpose of duty has simply awakened those sensibilities which qualify him to do justice to truths to which he had previously been irresponsible, and therefore unjust.

3. The purpose of duty makes a man candid in his judgments. So long as this purpose is withheld, a man cannot be entirely fair in his inquiries after the truth which enforces duty. He may think he is, he may intend to be, he may carefully guard himself against bias

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or one-sidedness, but he cannot escape their subtle influence. There is no biasing influence so subtle and so powerful as that which springs from a conscious insubjection to duty. Let the duty which is slighted concern but a single person or a single action, and it may paralyze the will, and blind the judgment. How much more when such dishonor or neglect concerns the purpose which makes the man! If Christ is accepted as from God, the man must at once consecrate himself to a life of duty as a servant of Christ. So long as he hesitates to accept such a life, even under the pressure of his own convicted conscience, he cannot avoid the bias to judge inadequately or unjustly of the claims of a master who, if he comes from God, commands him, in the name of God, to yield to his commands and invitations to a life which he dislikes to enter. But let the life be accepted, because of its own intrinsic excellence, and this bias to uncandor will instantly cease.

4. Consecration to duty furnishes the evidence of personal experience. It not only prepares a man to estimate evidence, but it furnishes evidence of itself, and a species of evidence for which there can be no substitute, and to which there can be no refutation. Who doubts the reality of gratitude if he has felt it for himself? The selfish and sordid may argue that there can be no unselfish affection, but not the man whose inmost soul is glowing with its fire.

The loving parent and the devoted child would doubt their own existence sooner than deny the reality and sweetness of parental and filial love. The man of poetic impulse and sensibility believes in what he constantly feels. In like manner, the man who lives for duty as the will of God, knows and believes as no other man can know and believe, that to control passion, to repress envy, to return good for evil, to please not him-

self, to forgive his enemies, to wish well and do good to all men living, is the best and noblest use of his powers. You may argue against the convictions of such a man, but you cannot argue them down, for he has made trial of them for himself. You may frown down or sneer down his belief, but a fresh exercise of love and self-control sets aside both frown and sneer. The most attractive examples of wickedness only move him to pity for the ignorance of those who know no better life.

The man who is constantly making trial of the beatitudes of Christ, cannot possibly disbelieve in the truth of these sayings. The practice of Christian duty goes very far towards the belief that Christ is from God, because it excites an active sympathy with the character of Christ. To such a man, Christ, by his own personal experience of Christ's spirit, has become at least the noblest of ideals that God has given to man.

5. Consecration to duty brings a man to understand his failures and his guilt, and thus prepares him to believe in Christ as a divinely provided deliverer. The man who gives himself most earnestly to do the will of God, will the soonest discover how high and how broad it is. The more he aspires, the more sensitive will he be in respect to his failures. The more earnest and sincere are his efforts to be pure in feeling and in act, the more bitter will be his disappointments that he fails so often and so sadly. He cannot excuse himself. Can his Creator? His own heart condemns him. How much more must the ever-present and the spotless Jehovah? He cannot forgive himself. Can God forgive him? *Will* he forgive him, and how does he know that he will? If he forgives other men, will he forgive such a man as he is, — one so ambitious in promises and so poor in performance; the ready victim of so many foolish impulses and such imperious desires?

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His aspirations and efforts have not only issued in guilt, but they have demonstrated his weakness. He must have help in his great life-work, which is victory over himself — the establishment within himself of the better life. Not only must he have help, but he must have *hope* of help, or he will abandon his courage in the good fight which he has undertaken.

But, again, does the God whom he seeks to please and honor care for his failures and his sins? Does he care enough even to punish him, or to punish him any further than to leave him to become the sport and the victim of his frivolous aims, his petty envies, his impotent strifes, his unsuccessful resolutions, his imperious appetites, his bitter self-reproaches, his inward shame, and his comfortless and hopeless despair? He looks out upon the earth, and it answers nothing. Winter and summer pass and repass; and the earth replies, "The answer is not in me." God, if there be a God, is indeed very great; but he hides his presence and his pity behind and beneath changing phenomena and unchanging forces. He looks up into the heavens. The clouds come and go; the tempest gives place to the sunshine; and at night, when the sinful and helpless soul cries out for God's pity and forgiveness and help, there look down upon him only the silent and pitiless stars.

His needs are desperate. He has undertaken to realize the best that he can find within himself, — the law of duty. He has sought to be a noble and perfect man. He has revered his conscience as the voice of God. He has accepted its monitions as the high and holy laws of nature. But he has failed in the performance, and he is guilty and weak and helpless and hopeless. He wants as he never wanted any thing before, — he wants the assurance that his God cares for him in all this, and

will meet him with his personal sympathy, his personal forgiveness, and his personal aid.

He opens the New Testament, and there he finds—be it in romance or in history—the manifested God whom he seeks after,—God manifested neither in earth nor in sky, but in a man as pure, and as stern to the hypocrite and the self-righteous, as the bright and pitiless stars; yet as pitiful and as condescending to the humble and the fearful as the mother who comforted his childish sorrows, or the sister who charmed away his childish fears—who spoke to the most wicked and despairing, and so sincerely, the very words which he has been longing to hear, “*Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.*” He finds even *more* than this. It is not enough that he be forgiven. He desires, above all, a warrant for future success in that on which his heart is set; in the triumph of duty as the law of his being and the spring of his affections. He finds it written,—be it in romance or in history,—that, in an affectionate personal discipleship to Christ, there is success in all these aspirations and desires. “Abide in me, and I in you. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Without me ye can do nothing.” That the man could do little by himself, he has already learned by his many failures. What joy does it give him to read, even in romance, that there may be such a being as the condescending Christ who is able to turn his ideals of perfection into fact.

He asks again, “What of the future destiny of myself and others who aspire to a holier immortality?” And it thrills his heart to hear the words of solemn assurance in the language of prayer, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. I go to prepare a place for you, and will come again, and receive you unto myself. Neither pray

I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe in me through their word." What can he ask for more?

But is this not a romance? "It may be; but never did romance set forth such a personage as this," says the man still intent on the life of duty, "so completely fitted in word and feeling and act for all my needs, and speaking, dying, and living again, just as the manifested and condescending and pitying God might be supposed to do if he were to meet my extremest needs. All the words which he has spoken to which my experience can testify, I know are true; all the promises which I have been able to put to the test, I have found to be fulfilled. I cannot believe, when Christ speaks so truly of my wants and to my wants, that what he says concerning himself should be a romance or a lie. What shall I believe if this is not true? Surely, what is written of Christ is true if any thing is true. To whom shall I go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art the Christ, not alone the consecrated ideal of my wishes and my wants. Thou art more than an ideal. Thou art a fact, a living reality. Thou art the Son of the living God."

But is not the story very improbable? That depends entirely on the point of view from which you read it. If you read it as a scientist or literary critic, or as an historian of man's outward and ordinary life, much more if you read it at a spectacle or a dance or a feast, much more if you read it in passion or drunkenness or pride, much more if you read it with a sneer or bitter disdain or contemptuous satire, it is grossly improbable. But if you read it as one desperately in earnest to do the will of God, or as one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, still more as one stung with remorse, or depressed by guilt, or hopeless from despair, it is altogether probable. Its very improbabilities, when tried

by other standards, make it to be altogether probable when measured by man's needs, — nay, these so-called improbabilities almost prove it to be true, inasmuch as they lift the story above the range of ordinary romance, and prove that it neither could nor would have been invented by man.

It is no strange thing in human experience that what seems unlikely from one point of view, should seem natural and orderly when viewed from another. The planets move in a maze as seen from the earth, but present a system of harmonious revolutions when seen from the sun. A crowded mass of men seen from one point of observation, present a spectacle of chaotic disorder; but when looked at from another, every man, as he stands or moves, contributes to the order of the whole. The supremacy and costliness of the diamond, when viewed in one light, are doubted. The bystander cannot believe you when you assert that it is a gem of priceless worth, and, perhaps, prefers the manufactured paste. But as he changes his position, and views it in another light, there flashes upon his eye a brightness so intense and powerful as to require and admit no other argument.

The position from which to view Christ's person and Christ's work in order to judge of his worth and his truth, is the position of a man who essays to do the will of God, and fails. They that are whole have no need of a physician. The man who is sick is alone competent to believe in the medicine, and in the physician who brings it. Most pertinent is the remark of Coleridge: "*Evidences* of Christianity? I am weary of the word. Let a man first discover his *need* of Christianity!"

6. This estimate of the divine fitness of Christianity to supply one's personal needs prepares him to credit the testimony of those who have actually put it to the

proof. In one, and that a most important sense, the experience of one man can be no substitute for actual trial by another. But the man who is in earnest to do the will of God, has taken the one step which is essential for him in order to understand and appreciate the steps in which others have gone beyond him. He has learned by trial the value of the interest at stake. He believes in duty because he has made trial of it: he believes in sin,—alas! his efforts to do his duty have given abundant experience of failure. He believes in guilt because he has faced it in his own condemning conscience: he believes in his own weakness, because the more he has aspired, the less perfectly he has achieved. The fitness and completeness of Christ to meet this weakness and fear are seen as never before. He almost believes and obeys because of his very desire of relief, and because of the richness and fulness of the promise. While he hesitates, there break upon his ear the consenting voices of an innumerable company—a multitude whom no man can number—of those who have put Christ to the proof, who declare with tears of gratitude and shouts of praise that they once stood where he stands, hesitated where he lingered, heard the same reasons which now move him, and at last trusted the promises of Christ, and found that his promises were true. Here is a *verified experiment* attested by myriads of the living and the dead. The gospel has been tried by the young and the old, the wise and the weak, the cultured and the untaught, by men and women under every variety of climate and civilization, in every stage of guilt and innocence, and all have found it better than it promised to be, and its Lord more fully accredited to be the Christ of God. This testimony is every day repeated in myriads of prayers that go up before God. It is warbled and sung in the praises of throngs of men, in the sacred-

ness of solitude, and under the inspiration of worship. It is attested by the peace of God that is written on the brows of myriads of lifelong sufferers, and by the unutterable joy which has looked forth from the eyes of multitudes as they have wrestled with death. The disciples of Christ are divided on many points; but on one point their testimony is united,—that he has proved himself to be nearer and better than they could have expected with the measure of faith and love which they have given him. That man only who is in earnest to do the will of God, is qualified to estimate the question which has been submitted to the experiment of all these generations. He alone is competent to appreciate the decisiveness of the result. If he judges wisely, he cannot but thus reason and decide. “No human interest is so important as this: of this I am confident. No test by experiment has ever been so ample, and so variously applied. No result has been so unvaried. If any experiment of this kind admits of being verified, the capacity of Christianity to do all that it promises has been settled by trial.”

Here I leave my argument. The positions taken seem to me to be conclusive,—that to make the purpose of duty the indispensable requisite to confirmed faith, is altogether rational and philosophical. Christianity is not peculiar in this. Every science, every art, every taste, every mode of life, even the fickle and fleeting fashions of the hour, require to be in some sense taken upon trust before they give complete and settled satisfaction to the mind. All the great teachers of the world have required a “purged eyesight” from their disciples. But Christ alone has promised to make himself known as the Son of God, to every docile and obedient soul.

But what if a man does not yet believe? What if he does not yet know that the doctrine of Christ is from



God? Are there not many in these days, and is not their number increasing, who seem earnestly conscientious, but who deny the divine authority of Christ? Nay, are there not many who even in the name of duty and its intuitions reject his supernatural claims? What shall we make of these exceptions? If the promise is true, does not the converse follow, that every man who denies, or even doubts, the claims of Christ, must fail to make duty the supreme and holiest thing? Not in the least. It is a promise that invites, and must be turned to use for each man's individual self. It is a precept for use and encouragement, but not a proposition to satisfy curiosity, or provoke censoriousness. The promise is general. It provides for exceptions, and supposes many delays. It supposes that conviction must rest upon evidence. Evidence may be distorted by tradition, or misrepresented by dishonesty, or in many ways be clouded and confused, even to an honest mind. The "honest doubter" may go on to the day of his death, the victim of traditional associations, a one-sided education, or some idol of the market-place or the schools. It is not unjust to the spirit of the promise to suppose that to the honest doubter under special limitations, the distinct knowledge that Christ is indeed from God may be reserved for the moment when the manifested Christ shall be unveiled to his beatific vision; when passing beneath the eternal gates, and lifting his eyes in wondering amazement, he shall break forth into the song, "Thou *art* the King of Glory, O Christ!"

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,* — You are going forth into life as men of education and culture. It is no secret to you that not a few of this class at the present time are greatly in doubt whether the doctrine and the person of Christ are in any special sense from

God. Let me remind you that the peculiar exposures of men of culture at present do not so much proceed from the new phases of science, or the new revelations of history, or any new insight of criticism, as from the powerful and subtle — powerful because they are subtle — moral exposures, which are incident to their peculiar life. The training of educated men usually lifts them above the grosser offences of fraud, dishonesty, sensuality, and violence. Their occupations excite their intellectual energies, and tend to the well-being and adornment of men. But these occupations are intensely and peculiarly engrossing, and easily create a world of imaginary excitements and gratifications in which conscience and duty in their higher significance need not often enter, and the living God may be easily overlooked and denied. The real cause of the prevailing unbelief of thinking men at the present time is the want of moral earnestness in its highest and noblest forms, — this, and nothing more. This is evident from the significant facts, that the prevailing unbelief is atheistic rather than anti-Christian, that it denies conscience and duty as emphatically as it dispenses with Christ and the Christian hope, that it rejects the personal God as readily as it disowns the Word made flesh, that it doubts immortality as coolly as it sets aside the resurrection, and that it mocks at prayer as confidently as it sneers at miracles. It is still further evident from the fact, that many men of science and culture who accept Christ, find in their knowledge and culture incitements and confirmations rather than hinderances to faith. Let the suggestion be forever dismissed from your minds, which now and then is entertained in these halls, that unbelief or half-belief is either a mark of distinguished illumination, or a sad necessity, that must haunt and depress a cultivated mind.

History and observation abundantly prove that no class of men are more dogmatic or bigoted or perverse than men of culture, when they fail to bring fully into the light any data which should determine their conclusions on any subject, whether it be secular or sacred. Even right conclusions of history, science, philosophy, or letters, are not made sure by clearness of insight, amplitude of knowledge, comprehensiveness of view, felicity of diction, or elevation of sentiment, provided important facts or principles are omitted. Let, then, the moral light which is in every man, become darkness by wilful neglect or dishonor, and his conclusions concerning any subject with which these conclusions are concerned must be defective and misleading, just in proportion to the mental force by which they are derived, or the brilliancy by which they are made attractive. If a man be a scientist, and gives scant recognition to the force and laws of conscience ; or an historian, and overlooks the function of conscience in the story of the race ; or a literary critic, and slightly esteems the power which duty and faith exert on the phases of literature, — he of all men is most likely to come to false conclusions concerning the doctrine of Christ, simply because he is so clear and so self-reliant in his judgments, and so pronounced and refined in his tastes. On the other hand, let duty be sacredly revered by any man, let God be honored by an earnest life, and the materials for correct conclusions will be so abundant that his studies and acquisitions will minister to faith. Interpreted by the light of his own living experience, science, history, and criticism will all testify that Christ and his doctrine are from God.

But you are more than men of letters and science : your *manhood* is more to you than your intellectual acquisitions, or your æsthetic culture. This is often

forgotten in the secluded haunts of the university with its conventionalities, its conceit, and its factitious judgments. It is well that you are to go forth to try the free and bracing air of public life, and to move among the ways and haunts of common men. As you stand upon the threshold of your new life, and look backwards and forwards, let me give you this parting sentiment: A life of Christian faith is the only human life in which there are cheerfulness and hope, and an assured Christian faith can only be gained and sustained by the earnest practice of duty.

Some of you may have stood upon a mountain, and looked over an extended landscape which was enveloped in mist, and overhung with gloom. Yet here and there a narrow path of light might be traced dividing the mists, and terminating in some gilded summit in the distant horizon, which blended with the transfigured clouds. Such a path symbolizes the course of that man who seeks for a confirmed faith in Christ in the earnest practice of duty. At first he may see no farther before him than a single step, but that step is clear and sure. He may not see the heavens at all. The Sun of the soul, the Christ whom he would distinctly see, does not as yet reveal himself. Nothing is visible save an illuminated haze, giving light, and only light enough to guide his footsteps. He goes forward, and as the pathway opens before him, he sees farther and farther. The illuminated mist becomes more thin. Now and then a rift is opened in the clouds above. The sun is seen for a moment. It is again obscured. It appears again. Sooner or later both mists and clouds are gone, and forth comes the day!

May such be your life, — a life of a brighter and more assured Christian faith, at once the effect and the cause of a life of earnest duty to God and man! As you stand

upon this dividing line that separates your past and future life, and as you look forward earnestly into its darkness, one face looks out upon you. It is the face of Duty. Stern and severe it may seem, and it may speak in a voice that sometimes is harsh and unwelcome. But if you follow its guidance, and obey its voice, sooner or later shall come forth to each of you the manifested Son of God, who has promised, "If a man will love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." That you may put this promise to the proof, is my best and most cordial wish for each and every one of you, as I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## VII.

### *CHRISTIANITY AN ETHICAL FORCE.\**

"AND THIS I PRAY, THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND YET MORE AND MORE IN KNOWLEDGE AND IN ALL JUDGMENT; THAT YE MAY APPROVE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT." — *Philippians* i. 9, 10.

THESE words of prayer express the best wishes of the apostle for the pupils who had been under his training and care. They bring out in contrasted relief the two comprehensive elements of the Christian life, — love and knowledge. Love, the animating force, is kindled and sustained by Christ and his promises. Knowledge enlightens and directs man in his judgments concerning the acts and illustrations of duty, and is capable of indefinite refinement and culture. What is true of the individual is true of the race. If Christianity is permanent and divine, it must be equal to all the possible wants of man, in these two sides of man's nature. It must go on to the end of time, kindling a new life of feeling and spiritual force, and adapting itself to every condition of human progress, in the most advanced developments of science and art. If Christianity cannot do both these things, it is neither permanent nor divine. If man or humanity shall ever outgrow the need or the capacity for it in either or both of these applications, Christianity must take its place among the religions of the past. But if, on the other hand, its inspiring energy

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and its capacity for growth shall be equal to all the demands of the future, it will show itself to be the power and the wisdom of God.

It is no secret that Christianity at the present time is assailed at all points, and that, to all the assaults which are made upon it, men of education and culture are especially sensitive. It is assailed as a history and as a speculation. It is assailed on the side of positive science. It is also assailed as unequal to the new phases of private and public life. But of all these forms of assault, the subtlest and the most dangerous is that which is made upon it as a practical system. As long as Christianity can show itself to be the best and strongest of all existing moral forces, and to be equal to all the new demands of individual and social life, so long will it stand. But so soon as the faith of men shall be shaken in it as the best inspiration and guide of human life, it must suffer a temporary or a final eclipse. *In view of these assaults, I propose to speak of Christianity as an ethical or spiritual force in relation to modern questionings and objections.*

1. It is charged that Christianity is a religion of sentiment, and that sentiment is inconsistent with, or hostile to, science. Science, we are told, now rules the world, and sentiment must give way. Human life must hereafter be regulated by strictly scientific principles, and very soon no place will be left for Christian impulses and maxims. To this we answer, Christianity is not a religion of sentiment alone, but of sentiment directed and enlightened by knowledge. Its comprehensive precept is, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." It expressly commands, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, etc., if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, *think* on these things." It calls itself the truth, and therein

implies that its disciples should accept whatever is approved as true. It calls itself the light, and its disciples the children of light, and adds, "Whatsoever doth make manifest is" to be welcomed as the "light."

But to this it would be replied, The light and knowledge which Christianity recognizes are limited to but few objects and relations. Christianity professes to despise the present life. It fixes the heart on the world that is to be, and teaches men to mortify most of the tastes and desires that relate to the world that now is. Many obvious virtues it does not even recognize, much less does it enforce them. John Stuart Mill asserts, "While in the morality of the best pagan nations, duty to the state holds even a disproportionate place, in purely Christian ethics that grand department of duty is scarcely noticed or acknowledged." The author of "Christianity a Civilized Heathenism," finds in Christianity little more than a provision for the salvation of the soul in the future life, and assumes that its spirit is inconsistent with an active and zealous interest in civilization, science, or art. This treatise illustrates two things: The writer's misunderstanding of the aim and nature of Christianity, and the very narrow views of the same which have been held by many of its professors and teachers. We are told still further, that Christianity commands us to help the unfortunate and needy, while the new political economy teaches us that the weak and ignorant must and ought inevitably to go to the wall in the struggle for existence. Christianity prompts us to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. But the new science of humanity tells us that the children and widows of parents who have not insured their lives ought to suffer as a lesson and a warning against improvidence. Everywhere the science of living is organized on solid principles, the logical deductions from



which should be enforced with unsparing rigor. The exceptions which are urged in the name of pity and love are set aside with merciless assurance. It would seem, that, when the new science of life shall have reached its perfection, marriage will be no longer a matter of affection, but of the coolest calculation — upon data which ally us with the brutes, and chiefly respect our earthly life. Education will become a rigid and impersonal process of drilling, by means of the most approved educational machinery. Weak and unpromising infants will be disposed of as burdens to society. Feeble invalids, and unprofitable old men and women, will be scientifically and painlessly relieved of the life of which they and their friends are weary. Last of all, the body which offends the earth to which it is allied, is to be transfigured by fire, the most ethereal of agencies, in order that science may triumph over death in its special version of the song, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

There are many other so-called scientific theories of life which are greatly elevated above the earthly and sensual system which we have sketched, — theories which in some sort provide for the intellectual and the spiritual in man, as truly as for the animal. But so far as these theories emphasize the words of law, and leave out of view the ends of law as found in the sentiments of curiosity and wonder and trust, and refuse honor to that knowledge of duty and of God which leads us on to a manhood that is perfected in character and in joy, so far they are unscientific and narrow, just for the reason that they fail to regard the most important elements in the science of man and of human life.

But what is the truth? Simply this: Christianity does not profess to be in any sense a perfected science of human conduct, nor indeed to be a science at all.

It does not provide one out of ten thousand of the obvious rules for right living which we need daily and hourly to apply. The absolute rules which it gives to human conduct are such as are founded on those conditions of humanity which can never change, or such as serve as examples to illustrate a principle. The New Testament is in no sense a rounded code of morals, either rude or scientific. It kindles a new spirit, — it wakens a living energy which is subtle enough to penetrate all possible human relations, and expansive enough to animate every possible condition of human life, and strong enough to subdue to itself the most refined and artificial structures of human society. It enjoins the comprehensive duty of love to all men, and it declares that to love is to fulfil every conceivable law — which is now accepted or may hereafter be discovered. By teaching us to love all men, it directs us to do good to all men as we have opportunity. But if we are to do good to all men, we must *know* what is for their good. If we are to *know*, we must *learn*; and as soon as we begin to learn in the school of life, we begin to study the science of human living and acting. As each generation makes new advances in the science of wise living, Christianity takes up the results into its practical creed, and enforces them by that living code of duty which is ever making progress. Domestic economy and domestic rules in their simpler forms are the rudiments of our modern much-vaunted political science, which rises into complexity as the family is developed into the state. The precepts of good neighborhood which are required between two adjoining hamlets, are matured in the progress of ages into the maxims of sociology and the principles of international law. The brief maxims of barter and exchange which held good between Abraham and the sons of Heth are in due time expanded

into the refined and complicated principles of political economy. And yet as there is no point in this progress where common sense ceases, and science begins, so there is no point at which Christianity can be dispensed with. No science of human life and duty can rush so rapidly into being as to outrun Christianity. None can expand so widely as not to be filled in the instant with the subtle element of Christian love. Those conceptions of a scientific human life which fail to include God and duty can never be truly scientific, because they recognize but a part of man's nature. They are false in conclusion, because they are one-sided in their theory. The pretence that they are not sentimental, is equally shallow. By their own showing, they are steeped in sentimentalism. Their watch-cry is humanity and human progress. It is in the name of humanity that their adherents justify their principles. It is in the interest of human progress that they enforce their rules. It is in firm faith that human development moves onward that they propound their unfeeling and cruel dogmas, that they enact their solemn farces, and reiterate their inflated rhetoric. John Stuart Mill committed himself in the beginning of his career to the supreme guidance of what he accepted as science in the theory and practice of his life. All at once he discovered that intellectual activity could not satisfy him. He changed his theory and practice, and cultivated the feelings for their own sake. He became a sentimentalist; and he ended his career by solemnly contending that while there are no scientific grounds for receiving theism which the intellect can recognize, yet the theism of the imagination and the feelings should be cultivated for its emotional value. As if it were not the very essence of sentimentalism to feel by the help of a counterfeit or a make-belief. So Mr. Tyndall at the end of his address at Belfast, after forbidding his hear-

ers, in the name of science, to accept what he would call the theological notions of God and man, proceeds to command them in the name of sentiment to *feel* as though they were true. So the author of the "Cosmic Philosophy," after demonstrating, as he thinks, that science must remove the Creator farther and farther from our knowledge, essays to bring peace to our hearts by bidding us sing the song, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

2. It is urged that the Christian ideal of character will be displaced in the progress of modern culture. The Christian ideal, I need not say, is love to man that is disinterested, sincere, and self-sacrificing. That this love need not and ought not to be narrow or unintelligent has already been shown; but that it must be fervent, constant, and supreme, is self-evident. That it is pure and self-controlled, and righteous and just, need not be said; but that it is forbearing and kind and self-sacrificing, our hearts never cease to testify. That this conception was new to the world, is clear to the student of history. Notwithstanding all the quotations that are made from Oriental sages, which are supposed to match or surpass the words of Christ, the living example of Christ is confessedly original. It was not so much the words which Christ uttered, as the being who spoke and lived them, that brought to the human race this new conception of what man should aim to attain, and might hope to become. The Old Testament could only suggest a rude sketch of the ideal, true enough as far as it went, and fraught with hope and suggestion, but only a sketch — here and there a line, and now and then a color. Socrates had some longings for, and dim fore-shadowings of, what this ideal might do for man's heart; but of its moral pathos he had no adequate conception, or, rather, no conception at all. Marcus Aurelius sympathized with its justice and its considerateness, and

had some presentiment of its pity for human frailty and sorrow ; but it never entered his thoughts that a human being could soberly propose to himself, and successfully realize, the ideal of which Paul has sketched the salient features. The Greek tragedy opened to man a momentary gaze upon that human love that is stronger than death ; but the fervent and patient and long-suffering moral affection that at this moment blesses ten thousand Christian homes, and watches by thousands of sick-beds, was strange to the purest and loftiest suggestions of its imagination. The practical exigencies of life have suggested to the sharp-sighted and benevolent teachers of all nations many practical maxims of fairness and courtesy and gracefulness and decorum ; but Christ alone first introduced to men that ideal of love, whose looks are heavenly, and whose movements are divine. We contend that this characteristic sentiment of Christianity can never be improved nor outgrown. There is no conceivable exercise of human nature which is higher than this. There is no imaginable condition of spiritual being where the law of love is not a royal law. It is recorded of one of the sweetest and most honest writers of the present generation, who seemed to grope after Christian truth to the end of his life without finding it, "after standing long in silence together, gazing at the silent stars, he would turn from their oppressive magnificence with such words as these: 'Love must be better than hate in all worlds.'"

This ideal is the loftiest and the most attractive that can be framed by the imagination. There is nothing higher that I can ask of God than that he should love me, and pity me, and care for me, and comfort me. There is nothing sweeter and more gratifying that I can crave from my fellow-man. If the union of the Creator and the created blesses me with this sunshine of

their love, and sustains me by their uplifting arms, my blessedness is complete, if only I reflect back their love from my own loving heart. For the conduct of my life, it would seem that nothing more is required than that I manifest this love wisely, as I am instructed by experience, and refined by culture. How, then, can the Christian ideal ever be abandoned or displaced? What evidence is there that this most precious gift to the world is in danger of being lost? It can never formally be displaced, except as men become so utterly degenerate as to reject all thought of duty and goodness, or so earthly and sordid as to glory in their shame. It may, perhaps, be overlooked in the name of some single moral force or virtue, even though this virtue was born of Christian love, and has grown to strength and beauty under its fostering influence. And this is precisely the danger to which Christianity is exposed from the culture of the times. There is no denying that culture tempts to selfishness by science, by letters, and by art. Culture, whether in science or art, is necessarily self-absorbed, and tends to self-occupation. It may easily become selfish, even when prosecuted in the name of love and duty, as life becomes more artificial, and the demands of culture are more exacting. To be useful to his fellow-men, the philosopher, the man of letters, the scientist, and artist must concern themselves each with his appropriate work. He must gain reputation, inasmuch as reputation is a great power for good in his profession, his party, his church denomination, or his university. To be eminently useful, he must distance all his competitors, that he may use the power of his name in the service of man. Even moral culture requires special self-occupation, and sometimes degenerates into artificial sentimentalism. Culture also brings many dangers peculiar to itself. It creates new tastes

which are over-refined by gratification into sinful excess. By and by the Christian community which owes to the self-sacrificing love of Christ-like men its well-ordered state, its equal laws, its well-stocked libraries, its schools, its colleges, its galleries, and its hospitals, is so occupied with the fruits of the tree that it forgets the root from which it is nourished. It even becomes ashamed of the old-fashioned names of Christian goodness. It goes back to Stoic ideals of perfection as better than the love which seeks not her own, which is not puffed up, and thinketh no evil. Men of letters gather their private coteries, men of books set up their conventional ideals. Marcus Aurelius displaces Jesus. Seneca is preferred to Paul and John. The enthusiasm of Christian love is pronounced unworthy of a cool-headed critic, a well-read philosopher, or a practised man of affairs. The cross is retained, not as an inspiring symbol of living sentiment, but of a sentimentalism that is past, or that is tenderly remembered for its hallowed associations, or is coldly saluted with a civil but sneering courtesy, the studied civility of which imperfectly conceals its inward contempt. These phenomena are not the products of a broad-minded study of man in his best possibilities, but the signs of a deterioration in our moral and spiritual life. They are neither produced nor defended by men of the highest scientific spirit or the most truly catholic literary culture. Would these modern "high-toned" Stoics who are too proud to be human, or these dainty and over-refined Sybarites who are so highly cultivated as to hold that taste is above duty, and art is nobler than life, — would they but study the charity of the New Testament, they would find that in its adaptation to every condition of manhood, it "abideth" forever.

3. It is urged that the special motives of Christianity

are being rapidly displaced by the progress of science and of culture. We contend that they are as much needed and as powerful as ever. It is characteristic of these forces that they are personal forces. As such they are distinguished from the abstractions of the reflecting intellect and the brilliant phantasms of the exalted imagination. Christianity enforces upon man's attention, not alone the moral order of the universe, but the living God; not the conception of self-sacrificing love, but also the pitying and loving Christ. It appeals to our loyalty to the One, and our gratitude to the Other. It promises to us an immortal life, and thus transfigures and elevates our brief and uncertain mortal existence. These motives are not abstractions, but personal forces, and as such are addressed to man's heart and to his will, the very centre and spring of his personal and individual being. Christianity is not a system of ethics, albeit with the loftiest ideal and its unexhausted adaptations. Christianity is more than love to man, it is love to God, and love to man for God. It is a religion that brings each living man into personal relations with a personal God, with his individual conscience and his own future life. It is true this religion is none the less ethical for this reason. It is ethical in its authority, and ethical in its results. God does not command us by the right of the strongest, or by the inscrutable mystery of his self-existence. Christ does not move us to mere emotion, which may be diluted into a quiet or excited to a passionate sentimentalism, but to feeling ennobled and invigorated by duty. An immortality of selfishness and passion would neither deserve nor kindle our hope or our gratitude. But while the authority, the excellence, and the achievements of the gospel are only ethical, its energy is emphatically personal. The necessity and the power of this personal influence from heart to heart



and from God to man must continue forever, as long as personal needs are higher than the intellectual, as long as character is of more consequence than intellectual prowess and refinement, and above all as long as man is a creature and finite, and can find strength and pride in loyal obedience to God, his rightful King, or be moved to pity and forgiveness by having been himself forgiven.

An age of culture is an age of abstractions and of generalizations, an age of imagination and rhetoric. It concerns itself with principles and laws. It constructs theories of the universe, and theories of religion. It strives to find thought in every thing, from the development of the universe to the crystallized snow-flake which melts as it falls. It is in constant danger of forgetting that every thought requires a thinker, and every theory in science or art leads to a personal God. This natural order it inverts. It personifies its own abstractions, and then worships the work of its own hands. Each one of the chosen tribes of culture brings its separate piece of gold which he has wrought, to some eminent high priest at the altar of intellectual idolatry; and when many are cast into the fire, there comes out one or many golden calves, and the shout goes up for the moment, "These be thy gods, O Israel!" Force—a mere abstraction thin enough to be mysterious, and prismatic enough to reflect the party-colored hues of a lively fancy—is worshipped as the unknown and unknowable God, which is capable of indefinite transformation into matter and spirit, but of no creation for either. The methods and plan after which the divine thinker acts, are exalted into a personified but not a personal energy, called Evolution. Law is substituted for the law-giving and law-abiding God. The abstractions of ethics are lifted higher than the one

Great Moral Person, or are thought to be sufficient without him. The astronomer no sooner discovers a new thought of God, than he thinks that he or his theory made and controls the universe, and that it is the glory of his system which the heavens declare, and his handiwork which the starry firmament showeth forth. The political philosopher, the historical theorist, the critic in literature and art, each loses sight of the living God in some favorite theory or law, or principle. When Christianity comes into question, it is the Christian temper and character which are recognized, and not the personal Christ. It may be conceded that the belief in Christ's person has established the Christian ideal in the world's honor; but now this ideal has been accepted, it is of no sort of consequence what the man of science thinks of Christ. To act with reference to Christ's favor, is to act from a selfish or mercenary motive. To fear God's displeasure, or to recognize him as capable of displeasure, is to suffer a loss of self-respect. What matter is it how I feel toward a personal God, or whether I recognize God at all, if I only aim at rectitude and holiness? It is better and nobler to do right for its own sake than out of respect to the will or favor of God. As to immortality, and the hopes or fears which another life awakens, it is doubtful whether such a life is conceivable, or is consistent with the greatness of the universe and the littleness of man. The only worthy position which a wide-minded man can take, is not to care for it, and to be above all concern in respect to it. Indeed, he may even question whether a continued existence would be worth accepting, even if it were offered. It is perhaps better, when the time of our departure is at hand, to say, "I have fought the good fight, and am to pass into a dreamless sleep: henceforth my existence shall be in the thoughts which I have

evolved, and the impulses which I have imparted; and the imaginative creations which I have given to the coming generations." This is the so-called Religion of Humanity, the only religion deemed worthy of a scholar,—the very statement of which reveals its emptiness, humanity being nothing but an abstract term for the common needs and hopes and fears of many individual souls. And it is this abstraction which a dexterous word-player passes off for the God whom every human being cries after as an infant in the night with plaintive moaning, and knows not for what or why; or as lost men at sea shout for help when in mist and darkness a spectral ship moves by, and returns no answer to their cry; or as a crazed lover looks out wistfully and longingly day after day for her dead betrothed to return. We know that a religion without a personal force cannot satisfy, because we know that man cannot be or make a god to himself without being in the end a self-worshipper; and the worship of self is the most unsatisfying, and often the most degrading, of all worship. The worship of the abstractions of speculation by the scientist, and of the personifications of the imagination by the literary critic, is in the last analysis a kind of fetichism. It cannot last, because it neither satisfies the intellect nor fills the heart. Science, if true to itself, must come back to a personal God as the best solution of a universe in which there is objective thought. Literature must acknowledge that Christ and an immortal life furnish the noblest and the most sustained inspiration. The peculiar personal influences of Christianity are necessary as a counterpoise against the temptations which are incident to modern life. Wealth was never more attractive and tempting than now. Luxury was never so various and refined in its ministrations and appliances. Genius for science, art, or letters was never so

potent over cultivated minds. In short, man as an individual and in organized masses was never so strongly tempted to worship himself, and to deny his Creator, to rely upon the inspiration of his own being, whether scientific, imaginative, or ethical, and to dispense with the Christ of whom it has been said — and it is true — that before him every knee shall bow. No influence short of the living God and the redeeming Son of God can possibly hold an individual or a generation against the intruding tide of these insidious influences.

4. It follows that Christianity can demonstrate its practical power by being applied in the lives of living men. As the gospel acts by means of personal agencies, so it requires living believers through whom it may manifest its power. First, love should be stimulated and sustained as never before. The impelling force that is created by faith in the loving God and the redeeming Christ should be more simple, more fervent, and more controlling. A divided faith and feeble love cannot live, in these days of pretentious atheism and confident unbelief. The thinker who believes in God and in Christ at all must believe with simplicity and ardor. Every man who is a man must take the one side or the other. If the universe is so vast as it is now known to be, and if it is so full of thought in its plan, and so long in its history, then its ruling originator is worthy of our most reverent worship and our loyal service. If man is not overlooked in this universe, but has been visited by the pitying Christ, then the soul that is refined by culture, and made generous and noble by modern life, owes the tenderest and most constant gratitude to the Saviour and King of his redeemed race. If the moral purposes of God are more and more clearly manifest than ever to the instructed and sensitive Christian scholar, then his consecration to the kingdom of

God should be more fervent and active than was possible even in the fresh revelations of the apostolic age.

At the same time, his love should abound in knowledge and all judgment as never before. He should learn to approve the things which are excellent, — whether of science, of literature, of art, of manners, of culture in all its forms; and, when he approves them, he should make them his own as far as he may. Man does not live by bread alone, but by all the institutions which are the atmosphere for his growth and well-being, — by the family, the neighborhood, the state, the church, the school, the college, the profession or business he follows, by books, by newspapers, and by all the principles and truths with which science instructs him and culture refines him, and the appliances by which modern life can minister to his usefulness and his enjoyment. If Christianity is from God, all these things should be known and approved and mastered by every believer, and become instruments of power in his hands, or robes and ornaments of beauty and grace for his wearing. To narrow the sphere of Christian feeling and effort to mere conversion and church-going, to Christian Associations and prayer-meetings, and to fail to apply it to the manifold and magnificent developments of public and private life, is pitifully and contemptibly to narrow and dishonor our conception of the kingdom of God. To teach or to hold that a Christian artisan or merchant or farmer can discharge his obligations to his master or his generation in manifest ignorance or sordid disdain of what science and the arts are doing for man, — above all, to teach that a Christian scholar, or a scholar with Christian aspirations, may use these modern appliances solely or chiefly as instruments for a selfish ambition, — is to be untrue to the first principles of the gospel of Christ. If the Church and believing men do not concern them-

selves, in such a country as this, and at such a day as this, with the problems of political and social life; if they are not examples and defenders of sound principles in finance, in banking, in trade, in political nominations and elections, in legislation of every kind, especially upon matters relating to public health and to public and private morality, in public spirit, in the endowment and sustentation of all the institutions of education and culture, in the administration and the rebuke of that wonderful agency for good and evil — modern journalism — in the formation of a just and efficient public sentiment, in the rebuke of immorality when it is exposed, in the defence of character when wantonly assailed, in short, in the Christianization of this our modern artificial life, — then an unchristian and atheistic philosophy will enter in and take possession of these agencies, and, in corrupting them, will poison the common atmosphere which all men breathe.

We would not have the Church or the pulpit be a whit less fervent in its worship, or less spiritual in its utterances and its appeals, but we would have it arouse every man to study the art of Christian living as it is made possible by the developments of modern culture and modern intelligence. What might not happen if, with the reviving sense of spiritual realities for which we pray, there were a reviving of Christian morality in the larger sense of the word, and all Christian believers should show, as many do, how manifold and excellent are the ways of Christian living and influence which now are possible which were never possible before? If these beautiful and enlightened moralities that are now seen to be so desirable and so practicable were universally assumed in the Christian Church, and sought for with fervent and unflagging zeal under the inspiration of revived faith in the living God as manifest in Christ,

the voice would speedily be heard in all the cities and villages of Christendom, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." In the deserts of heathenism also the cry would everywhere be sounded, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight a highway for our God."

These considerations appeal with special force to the minds of educated men, — especially to educated young men. They are forced to know something of modern doubt and unbelief, — to confer with those questionings which disturb so many minds, and darken so many hearts. They are familiar with the achievements and promises of science in all its forms, and are sensitively alive to the refinements of culture, literature, and art. They know how blest and exalted a condition it is to believe in God and in Christ, for they can best measure the greatness of God and the condescension of Christ by the vastness of the universe and the insignificance of man. They are instructed, by reading and thought, to do justice to the permanence and authority of moral law. They learn from history that the dominion of God is an everlasting dominion. They see in literature the brightness and strength of goodness, and the blackness and weakness of sin, as also the permanence and value of character in comparison with all other earthly acquisitions. Their sagacious minds and cultivated tastes enable them to approve the things that are excellent in a consistent and attractive Christian life. They go forth to occupy places of influence and power at a time when ideas, earnestly and eloquently — or falsely and plausibly — set forth, rule the world. They go forth at an exciting, if not a critical, period of the world's history, when positions are taken, opinions are formed,

and great interests triumph and fall with a rapidity which has never been equalled in other times. In one aspect it would seem that an individual was never so insignificant as now, so sweeping are the rapid currents of our public life. In another aspect it would seem that the humblest thought and the weakest aspiration of every earnest soul cannot fail to be more quickly and widely felt than ever before.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class*,—I commend these considerations to you, as you go forth to the responsibilities of public life. Most of these principles are familiar to your minds. They have been inculcated in your class-rooms and from this pulpit. You have been taught that the truths of Christianity are so far from being inconsistent with scientific truth, that they confirm it, and are confirmed by it; and that the practical principles of Christianity are broad and stable enough to support any superstructure of individual or public life, however elaborate and stately, while its refining influences cannot fail to clothe that edifice with ever-growing grace and beauty. You have learned, by precept at least, if not by example, that ardent devotion to the kingdom of God rather favors than represses a generous culture and refined tastes, and that the consistent and fervent Christian scholar is in no way disqualified for the most fearless allegiance to science, or the most successful culture of letters. You have felt that the controlling spirit of zeal for science and culture, in theory at least, is the spirit of Christian faith and love and progressive enlightenment.

Standing where you for a moment now stand, viewing your college life in its relations to God and duty and the immortal life, and casting one lingering and tender look upon its opportunities, now gone by, it



may be that you regret that your own faith in God, and devotion to duty, have not been more fervent and progressive. Similar regrets and wishes will often come to you. As you shall be called to grapple more earnestly with the realities of life, we believe that with many of you these remembered impressions will bring forth fruit. We are often cheered, in our labors of routine and discouragement, as we learn from so many of the graduates who return or report themselves at the old college home, that the lessons concerning character which were here imparted have been remembered in those times of earnest and sober thought which are sure to overtake every man, sooner or later, in the battle of life. We urge you to cherish these remembrances. Hold fast to them in the hour of temptation. Have faith in their truth, and yield your hearts to their power.

You go forth into life at a time when the rushing current of modern life threatens to take every man from his feet whose feet do not stand upon duty, and whose hands are not stretched forth toward God. The rewards of earthly ambition were never so tempting as now, it is true, and it is also true that they were never more uncertain and disappointing. Wealth may be gained by some, rapidly and easily; and wealth may be lost also, singularly and suddenly as never before. Power and influence may be achieved; but, unless they are that enduring power and influence which come from upright purposes and self-denying love, they will, in these days of the unsparing scrutiny of public men, be an uncertain trust. To one ambition, there is a certain prize, — the ambition to follow Christ in unselfish love, and to manifest that love in an enlightened and cultured Christian life. Culture may be achieved, and literature and art may be enjoyed; but if the soul is only refined in its tastes, and is not refined in its conscience and in its

affections toward God and man, the very refinement of its manners, its social enjoyments, its artistic tastes, and its literary appliances will make it a more empty and unsatisfactory thing to live, and a more dreadful thing to die. But to the cultured soul that is also loving to man, and humble and trustful to God, the future life is brighter in proportion to the refinement of its tastes and the reach of its imagination.

The university-men of our country are now appealed to as never before to show a noble and more intelligent public spirit, to make and enforce a more efficient public sentiment for honor and truth, and generosity and courage, in all the departments of public life. They are entreated to unite as a sacred band for the elevation, and, it may be, for the salvation, of this land. The call is loud and earnest. We exhort you to respond to it in the noblest way conceivable. We exhort you, while standing in this sacred place, and moved by these remembrances and aspirations, to pledge your energies and your zeal to an enlightened and unselfish Christian life. What can I wish for you that is better? What can I pray for you more earnestly than that "your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that you may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God"? With these wishes and this prayer, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## VIII.

### *THE FRUIT THAT SHALL REMAIN.\**

"THAT YE SHOULD GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN."—*JOHN XX. 16.*

THE times in which we are living are eminently uncertain and depressing, especially to those who are forming their plans for life. Fifteen years ago, and the country was startled by the first shock of civil war. For four years or more the hitherto stable structure of our government was heaving to and fro as in the vibrations of an earthquake. Then ensued a season of unnatural financial and speculative excitement, with feverish expectations of wealth, and sanguine dreams of easy success at little cost or by dishonest devices. Then came an ominous stagnation, followed by the crash after crash of gigantic accumulations. Enormous assets now shrink into nothing, or are transformed into heavy burdens. Promising enterprises disappoint the confidence of sanguine or deluded investors. Two desolating fires consume the centres of two most solid and most enterprising representative cities. Stupendous frauds begin to be exposed. The characters of men hitherto held to be of the purest and holiest, are assailed, whether rightly or wrongly is of little consequence; for faith in man is perceptibly dying out of the community, and in the same proportion faith in goodness, and faith in God.

\* *June 25, 1876.*

The uncertainty and distrust thus begun in commercial and political and social circles still continue. Even the faith of men in the laws of trade seems almost to fail them as season after season disappoints their hopes. The grinding processes of adjustment are still going on, and, it would seem, will not cease till the masses of accumulated capital are broken into atoms. The faith of men in moral law which ought to increase under this discipline, seems rather to be disturbed by a morbid sympathy with the uncertainties of trade, of politics, and of public confidence. Science even is infected with a spirit of romancing. It bewilders its own votaries with extravagant and contradictory theories induced by the richness of its revelations, and the excitements of its brilliant discoveries. It more than whispers that the immortality to which men might turn with hope, in their experiences of change and disappointment, is a grave uncertainty. And, to complete this mockery of our woe, philosophy confidently tells us that the universe in its present condition is uncertain, and borne forward upon mighty waves of tendency, of which we know only that they exist, and must displace man and his interests by other forms of being, swallowing in their movements our contemptible individual existence, and hopes and fears. To complete the climax, we are as positively assured that God himself is so enveloped with clouds of uncertainty that the only certain thing of him that we know is that nothing can be certainly known.

In one view, this outlook of uncertainty is not very hopeful to a young man who stands at the threshold of life. On the one hand he is tempted to depression or despair, on the other to recklessness of faith and honor and duty. There is danger that some will snatch at the prizes that are nearest and most positive in despair of any

other, as men at a fire or in an earthquake or in shipwreck will forget their manhood in the insane excitement of despair. Some of you will think that this picture is overdrawn. I cannot but think that there is some truth in its portraiture of the feelings with which thoughtful young men are now looking out upon life.

Let me remind you that the times were any thing but hopeful when Christ uttered the words of our text. Surely, there were never so many, and never such extreme, paradoxes of fact and of promise as are presented in Christ's condition, and the pledges he made to his disciples. He was to leave them alone in a desperate struggle with powerful foes, and yet by being left alone they would gain strength and victory. He was himself to die; but it was only by dying, that, as a seed falls into the ground, he should bring forth fruit. He was to die upon the cross, but it was only from the cross that he could ascend to the throne of power in his kingdom. His trembling disciples feared that in a few days they should be scattered, and their work destroyed; but he assures them that he sends them forth, and that they alone should bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain.

What Christ said in these words, is true of every young man who is going forth into life. If he goes forth in Christ's service, he is certain to bring forth fruit, and this fruit shall remain. *My theme is success in life*, not in the general sense, such as is true of all men, but in the special sense in which it is true of an educated Christian man. I shall consider (1) the conditions, and (2) the character, of this success.

1. What are the conditions of a successful life, or who are those whom Christ sends forth to bring forth fruit? The first condition is a just and hearty acceptance of the Christian ideal of character. The faith in

Christ which constitutes a disciple has two sides, — the ethical and the personal. From the one side, a man believes in Christ's spirit, and delights in his example. From the other, he loves and trusts in Christ as a person. Normally the one involves the other, but the ethical comes first to our notice. It is certain that Christ came into the world manifesting a peculiar spirit, and living a peculiar life. The world at first did not even understand this life, and it has learned very slowly to believe in it. It is true now as it was then, if a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Christ pleased not himself, and Christ himself declared that the disciple is not above his master. And yet the ethical side of Christian discipleship approves itself to the consciences of all men. The thinker and the student can easily appreciate its worth and authority, and hence to such a man it is the fundamental condition of Christian success. No stiff dogmatism of theologic orthodoxy, no partisan zeal for the formulas of this or that metaphysical school, no confident or passionate trust in Christ's death, can take the place of a living faith in his temper and life. No ecstatic worship of Christ, as a divine person, can be set off against the neglect of Christ as the ideal of human perfection. Some who reject Christ as an object of personal trust, fervently accept Christ as their ideal of goodness. When George Eliot makes her heroine say "that by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is, or cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil, — widening the skirts of light, and making the struggle with darkness narrower ;" and again, "I try not to have desires merely for myself, because they may not be good for others, and I have too much already," — we have a fine example of the power of this life to command and move the human heart, and

of the progress it has made in the circles of what is sometimes called negative faith. We can far more easily conceive that a person should withhold faith in Christ's person, provided he is baptized with Christ's Spirit, and yet be a true disciple, than that he should withhold faith in Christ's Spirit. No dishonor can possibly be so great to the name and cause of Christ as the Pharisaic trust in the mere forms of worship, or the licentious reliance on his death with an open denial of his Spirit which is expressed by many whose lives are any thing but Christ-like. So far as Christian fruitfulness is concerned, it cannot possibly consist with a low or feeble appreciation of the Master's example. The plant, with a scanty nourishment, may put forth feeble buds and starveling leaves, but it must be transplanted into a better soil before it can bring forth any fruit that shall remain. At this very moment, the most fatal blight upon the fruitfulness of the Christian Church is the low and pitiful estimate which it puts upon its Master's spirit.

2. The next condition of permanent fruit from life is intelligence in the exemplification of the Christian ideal. To consent to Christ as the inspiration of our living, is not enough: we must learn how to realize that ideal under the practicable and prosaic conditions of every-day life. The Son of man came eating and drinking, the friend of publicans and sinners. Though he lived as no other man ever lived in the transcendent purity and unspotted blamelessness of his spirit, he frequented the scenes of public and domestic activity, gathering the dust and the dew from the highways and byways of common life, being present at feasts, and in the synagogues by day, and at night always resting in the quiet circle of modest friends, or in some lonely retreat for prayer and resolve. So should it be with his

disciples if they would be like their Master. So *must* it be with any man who proposes that his life should be fruitful for his fellow-men. He must not only accept the ideal Christ with his heart, but he must use his intellect to make Christ practical. It is not the abstract Christian which the world waits for or cares for, but it is the Christian in the concrete and the detail, — the Christian parent and the Christian child, the Christian neighbor and the Christian friend, the Christian teacher and the Christian pupil, the Christian buyer and the Christian seller, the Christian magistrate and the Christian citizen, and all these together living and organized as the Christian Commonwealth and the Christian Church, by the intelligent and fearless applications of Christian principles and Christian ideals to the varied conditions of human society. Such applications require intelligence to discern between what is possible and what is simply quixotic; experience that is slow to observe, and willing to be taught by fact and experiments; common sense that is not disgusted with its ideals, because they can only partially be realized under human limitations; and patience that has an indomitable faith in the correcting and redeeming power of time. The world has had its fair share of Christian romancing, since the amiable dreams of that band of children who went forth to sickening disappointment and death, in imitation of the fanatical madness of crusading kings and knights, down to the thousands and tens of thousands now living, who waste their energies, and squander their fortunes, and dream out their lives, in some quixotic enterprise, or some romantic theory of the kingdom of God, unmindful of the simple words of the Master, "Lo, the kingdom of God is within you," and the like; or the injunction, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are



just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think on these things:*" "Be not children in understanding, but *in understanding be ye men.*"

3. The practical wisdom which studies the relations of means to ends will not overlook the duty of attractiveness in the manifestations of the inner life. The capacity for culture distinguishes the man from the brute. Whatever feeble analogy modern theorists adduce under their unnatural desire to dehumanize their species, only serves to make the differences in man more conspicuous. Culture is not immoral nor anti-Christian because it attained so finished a completeness in Grecian art and letters without the inspiration of the Christian ideal of duty and self-sacrifice and hope. From whatsoever source man has received either the impulse or the realization, culture in all the forms of art and letters and manners is a divine gift, and cannot be disregarded by the man who would serve Christ in his generation. The hermit and the ascetic, squalid and beggarly, filthy and lazy, envious of human refinement, and malignant toward culture and grace, are simply nuisances in the kingdom of God. The Christian disciple who is constrained by the severities of duty to dispense with beauty and grace, knows not what spirit he is of. He forgets that Christ, by his condescending pity, has introduced into art forms of grace, and expressions of feeling, unknown to the world before, and into literature characters and scenes of which classic pathos and sympathy never dreamed, and into manners a delicacy and tenderness, a refinement and modesty, a courtesy and reserve, a self-respect and self-abnegation, which, like a robe of delicate texture, never cease to give an exquisite refinement to all the aspects of modern life. It is

only the rude and untaught novice in the kingdom of God who will despise culture in art, in literature, or in life. He who has most of the spirit of his Master, and is best instructed in the things of his kingdom, will value its beauty and grace; for he is quick to discern, that, as the haze in the landscape which enhances each form of grace and each tint of beauty is itself transformed by the sun from earth-born vapor, so the best of human culture is perpetually renewed by that Sun of righteousness who is constantly rising upon Christendom with healing in his wings.

4. Energy is another condition of fruitful discipleship. The Christian ideal may be accepted, the means of making it real may be understood, refinement of culture may lend its grace, and yet, if energy and zeal are wanting, there will be little fruit. The man's own soul may be safe, but the world will be little better for his having lived in it. What energy and enthusiasm are, we all understand. It is the spirit which brings a man with alacrity to the post of need and of work, which shakes off indolence, which never looks around for pretexts, or invents excuses, which always is ready to lend a helping hand. In the Christian life, it stands strongly and uncompromisingly upon its characteristic principles; it is never ashamed of the Christian name; it accepts, and is never afraid of, the logic of duty and sacrifice; it is unwearied and always abounding in Christian work; among the faithless, it is always faithful. The man with this spirit is always fresh for his work because his heart is always in it, and he accepts the condition that his work is always to be renewed.

5. But such energy only comes of the next condition of success, and that is faith in Christ's person. The spring of the Christian life is in the living Christ. The source from which Christianity renews its energy is

Christ believed and loved as a friend and Saviour. He whom Christ sends forth must believe in a present Christ, not in a symbolic ideal which has gathered around some vague and unreal myth or romance of history, but in a person who becomes more real, more wonderful, more worthy of love and trust, the more the man lives for him, and seeks to serve him. What it is thus to believe in Christ, each one must learn for himself; but every man who does learn it, finds in Christ the spring and secret of a life that is ever new. This it is which transforms admiration of the Christian ideal of which we have spoken, into the consecration of personal devotion. This is that which makes Christian sagacity a noble virtue, and Christian culture a loving service, and Christian energy a fervent consecration.

These are the conditions of a fruitful Christian life. Let me repeat them: The acceptance of the Christian ideal of manhood, sagacity and practical wisdom in applying it, culture in exemplifying it, energy in living it, and all because there is personal devotion to Christ, as worthy of love and trust. I repeat these conditions because one or more is lost sight of in our modern theories and modern practice, and because the Christian student has the advantage in being able to discriminate them.

Let us next consider the fruit which will remain from a life described.

1. Such a man will have permanent fruit *in himself*, for first of all he will have the joy of a rational and permanent faith. "I envy," says Sir Humphry Davy, "no quality of the mind or intellect in others,—not genius, power, wit, or fancy,—but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing." In one sense, faith is the essential con-

dition of the Christian's life. In another it is its own exceeding great reward. There is no so great a blessing to a man as to have some *cause* which he thoroughly believes in and honors, or some person whom he thoroughly admires, and is willing to die for. Such a faith gives the joy of fixed conviction and chivalrous fidelity. It is this which makes personal prejudices respectable, party spirit noble, and religious bigotry worthy of honor. The man who distrusts old truths, forsakes old friends, and abandons old beliefs, because they are old, is a conceited believer in himself, and sooner or later will find out that his idol is hollow, and his worship unsatisfying. There is no sign of our times more alarming than the hollow conceit which has taken possession of those who would be leaders of scientific and religious thinking, the low value set upon certainty and conviction, and the gaping credulity with which they accept the slightest suggestion of something new. The science of Christ requires faith, and it rewards with faith. The faith which it exacts is the reasonable confidence which tests allegiance: the faith with which it rewards is the satisfaction that attends those convictions which can only come from actual trial. It is such satisfaction as parents have who have trusted their children, and children have who have trusted their parents; such satisfaction as old friends find in one another, and wise readers draw from favorite books, and practised men gain in a worthy calling. To doubt of men and to doubt of a cause is sometimes necessary, for much of life is a strife and a labor; but to doubt never gives rest or reward, and that which gives zest to critical inquiry is the assurance of stronger conviction at the end. The Christian is always putting his Master to the proof, and always finding him true to his word.

Courage also comes as the permanent fruit of the

Christian life. Courage, as Emerson wisely affirms, is the having done a thing before. The Christian who has bravely fought the first battle of self-consecration and self-sacrifice, has, in a sense, fought all that are to follow. The man who has intelligently and heartily accepted the spirit of discipleship, has nothing new to fear. He who has conquered himself, has conquered the world. He has looked every struggle and every trial boldly in the face. He who holds himself ready in spirit to do and suffer his Master's will, has anticipated all the battles of life, and turned every one into a victory. Courage to the Christian life also means hope, — not the hope of romantic dreams, or insane speculation, or desperate chances of success, but the hope that springs out of the achieved experiences of the past.

Intellectual excitement and growth is another permanent fruit of Christian service. I do not assert that this fruit is always gathered from the tree of life, but I do assert that it might and ought to be. I do not assert that intellectual products will grow spontaneously without labor, as the fruit of prayer and right purposes. As there is no sanction for intellectual laziness in the kingdom of the Master, there are no promises of intellectual power without intellectual effort. But, on the other hand, as the truths of faith demand the most earnest thinking; as the principles of Christian duty are ever involving new and difficult solutions, as Christian literature and art and manners are ever presenting new excitements; as every man's personal trials and struggles necessarily task him to new reflection; and as communion with God, and discipleship to Christ, summon the mind to fresh activities, — it follows that a fresh and earnest and independent Christian life cannot be prosecuted without the vigorous exercise of intellectual power, and cannot be achieved without a vigorous intel-

lectual growth. I know that this doctrine is not universally received. There are very high and very mean authorities who teach that intellectual dependence and laziness are indications of humility and contentment; but the doctrine should be counted as one of the most ignoble and transparent of fallacies, at least with every man trained in a Christian university.

2. We ask what will the world do for such a man? What fruit will he find among his fellow-men that is worth gathering? We answer, First of all, the fruit of his love and usefulness. Whatever the world denies a man, it cannot deny him the capacity to bless it with his love, and to impart some fruit of active goodness. Even if the world does no more for him than to give him a place in which to suffer and die, it cannot refuse to be moved by the example of his patient submission, and his love that is stronger than death. Hard and selfish and ungrateful as the world is said to be, it never refuses a genial soil to a seed of goodness like this. Such seed always sprouts and bears fruit long after the man who has sown it is forgotten. The chance word of kindness, the cheap smile of sympathy, the helping hand to the weary and forlorn, the patient goodness of suffering parent or brother or sister or child, sown in weakness, and forgotten by the sower, has often been raised in power in this life in the inspiration of some great character at the turning-point in some great crisis, with the gratitude of a nation or of the race. Usefulness in life is not measured by what men talk of, and record. What seems to be the widow's mite, or the orphan's blessing, is not merely accepted as a wish and purpose. It becomes an actual power in the energetic forces that tell most in human affairs. It is a wise philosophy which advises, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not

whether shall prosper, either this or that." Men of our day propose a career, and adore success, and scorn to fail. It is ignoble and unmanly not to do all these; but it does not require a Christian philosophy to teach us that what men call success and a career is not always a test of merit; and that, in the scrambles and jostlings of life, there are sometimes greater dignity and higher manhood and keener satisfaction in defeat than in triumph; and that the man who loses every thing, because he will save his honor and his conscience, is the man who wins for himself, and blesses the world. The greater the loss, sometimes the greater the gain. The shorter the life, the longer the influence. Myriads of men and women, nay, of children, who have lived in obscure villages and remote hamlets, have in one way and another been great powers in the world.

But what shall we get from the world? Shall we always give, and never receive? Is all this a matter of chance and accident? or, if every thing in life is seen to be a matter of law and necessity, is not all the getting and winning resolved into the survival of the fittest? With man, as it seems to be in nature, do not the stronger drive the weaker to the wall? Does not the law of supply and demand become more savage as it is more obtrusive in all the departments of human life? Are not capacity and skill and combination and organization and effrontery and force more and more in demand? and are not educated men likely to be trained more and more to a hard faith in themselves, and a desperate and pushing confidence of self-assertion? In place of the reserve and modesty which were formerly thought to be the graceful robe of true merit, is it now to be forced to assume the steel armor of assurance, the very polish of which is hard and blinding? Alas for the world of letters and manners, and morals too, if this be so—if

science and letters are to dry up faith and sympathy, and to laugh down courtesy and refinement, and force is to extinguish personality, and necessity is to be enthroned as the living God, and the survival of the fittest is to displace the condescending and pitying Christ! We repeat the question, What shall we get from the world? and ask how it shall be answered, now that it is becoming more and more clear that in human life, as in nature, law everywhere reigns, and law to be beneficent, must be uncompromising and stern? There are two ways of answering this question according to our point of view. From one point we answer it thus: We cannot deny that the science of human life rests entirely on the recognition of law. Every village in New England or Oregon witnesses to the presence of forces that have had centuries of growth, and were known of old in India. Every house-door tells of traditions of ages. The handshaking of every peasant, and his morning and evening greeting, are an inheritance of the distant past. The rise and fall of every family, the gathering and dissipation of every fortune, the success and disappointment of every politician, the making and marring of every reputation, the success or defeat of every scholar, are governed by the eternal laws which pertain alike to the growth of every mind, the development of every character, and the gain and loss of every life. These laws are always repeating themselves. Therefore study them well; learn the lucky combination, and it shall be to thee the "open sesame" of success. This is one answer to our question, What shall we get from the world? You will get what by skill and effrontery thou canst extort by a sagacious knowledge of its laws, and a cunning hiding of thy hand.

There is another answer, and it is this: The laws of human competition and human success which you fear



are your kindest friends. They never deceive. You can trust them in the darkness and in the light, in fire and in frost, in the sunshine and in the tempest. Under their domain you will, in the long-run, gain what you deserve, if you are content to gain by the docile study of the conditions of success, and by patiently biding your time. But these laws are never greater nor stronger than God. Though grand beyond our comprehension, and seemingly beyond the control of their Maker, they all lie loosely in his hands, and he can combine and clinch them at his will. Though in every event the eternal laws repeat themselves so that there is nothing new under the sun, yet in every event the combination is novel, and has never been repeated before. Each individual is upheld by the power, and guided by the providence, of the heavenly Father. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his consent, and the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

It is not to be overlooked, that whatever view we take of law and providence, the moral forces are regarded as supreme by every thoughtful mind. If we may excuse the vulgar gambler and the low-lived politician, the half-trained teacher and the extemporized writer, lawyer, and preacher, for their faith in trickery and fraud, we cannot excuse the instructed reader of history or the sagacious observer of man and his nature. Scholars and thinkers are nowadays supposed to know that the economies of human life are not, in the long-run, favorable to falsehood and pretension. Though men for a time may trust the dishonest and the superficial, they will, sooner or later, render to true men their permanent honor. If worst comes to the worst, they may kill the prophets of one generation, but the next generation will construct and decorate their tombs.

8. This suggests another thought. If the laws of the

universe are but the manifestations of God, and the laws under which they act are the conditions of his working, then the truly successful man is he the fruit of whose life is recognized and accepted by God. I find no conflict between law and God, — between stable forces and trusting prayer. The moment I catch a glimpse of a single force that pervades the universe, and rules from eternity, there begins to be disclosed step after step of the great altar-stairs that slope upward to God, toward the God whom I cannot see, along which angels of tenderest sympathy troop downward to sustain and comfort man, and mount upward to lay upon its summit man's humblest service, there to remain forever in the heart of God. This vast network of forces, so infinite in extent, so vast in power, so resistless in energy, is so delicate in its ministrations, so refined in its blessing, so glorious in its aspects, so soothing in its repose, that it becomes to my faith the investiture and the manifestation of the tenderest sympathy, the purest holiness, and the most long-suffering pity. It is the garment of light with which God is covered, only that through its transparency men may see his personality and love, and yet may live. If I believe that in God's workings with nature and with man, nothing that is worth saving can possibly be lost, I infer that nothing which I can honestly attempt can possibly be forgotten, but that every vow and wish of blessing, and every humble work of love to man, shall be recorded in his heart, and engraven upon his memory, and remain there forever.

If, again, I notice how God in nature even, is ever stooping to man, and man is ever discovering new proofs of his minutest and most loving tenderness, I infer that he will never forget me, nor any honest aspirations or patient labor. I am prepared to believe that he has spoken to me in Christ, and that the faithful promise,

uttered so long ago with such human tenderness and divine authority, assures me a blessing upon my life, and will never fail. As I read the history of high-minded men who have sought and prayed that they might not live in vain, I find that they all declare that whatever fruits of life have been gathered for Christ have been the only products which have remained grateful to their memory when their life on earth was nearly gone. I cannot but believe that the promise of Christ is true, and will be fulfilled for a laborer so humble and imperfect as myself.

4. This suggests the truth that there is another life in which whatever is good in the present shall be so perfected as to be worthy to remain. The last affectation of modern speculation is to despise the thought of immortality, and to dispense with the hopes and aspirations which it brings. But I do not find it to be human to indulge this caprice. You that are in the beginnings of manhood are already reaching forward with eagerness to the untried scenes of the present life, even though you know that they may bring care and disappointment and many a bitter hour. All these shadows which you forecast are glorified to your vision by the sunshine of hope, and defied in your ardor for noble effort and manly endurance. Then, again, there are hours in the saddest and darkest life which we would fain make immortal. There are days of health and peace, of transparent skies and exhilarating atmosphere, which we accept as types of the perfect life. There are heights of purpose and aspiration, of heroic self-conquest and loving sacrifice, of humble and hearty prayer, which we would be content should remain forever. Surely it is not unwise to hope, and not unhuman to desire, nor is it either irrational to believe, that some of the fruit of this present life may remain in the perfection of all of

it that has been good, and the destruction of all of it that was evil, by the transforming glory of the Christ in whom we trust. If, then, we believe that the fruit of life shall remain because it is recorded in Christ's heart, we believe that he will come again, and receive each one of us to himself. Because he lived, we shall live also. Many are the sons of this college who have gone forth into life from this place with many misgivings and many fears, yet with bright resolves to make good this promise of Christ, who are now resting with God, and rejoicing that the fruit of their life is safely gathered in a house in which it shall ever remain.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,*—I have no need to apologize for discoursing to you upon this practical theme, and in an earnest spirit. The occasion itself is practical, and finds you in a thoughtful and serious mood. Whatever the scene may be to others, to you it is fraught with the gravest interest. It may be a spectacle to all who look on, but to you it brings the most serious thoughts as you look back on the past, and it awakens earnest inquiries as you would forecast the future. From the loopholes of this retreat, you have often looked out upon the busy and active world, now with curiosity, then with ridicule, but always with criticism; sometimes with eagerness to mingle in its excitements, and share in its struggles, fully confident, perhaps, that you would play an important rôle in its affairs, and gather from it some honorable and permanent fruit. But now you have stepped down from the place of observation, and have almost reached the threshold of the door that will send you forth. No wonder that you linger upon this threshold, and that the walls which, till now, have seemed to shut you in, as you look back upon them seem as welcome defences from

invasion from without, and that what appeared to be enclosures of restraint look lovingly upon you, and call you back to their protecting care. But you cannot go back. Forward you must go. The last step must soon be taken, and you will find yourselves each fighting his battle, no longer a mimic but a stern struggle for what are called the prizes of life. You still stand upon the threshold, and wistfully inquire, "Whither will life take me, and what will life give me?" I hear a voice replying in the distance to each of you, gentle but clear, tender but firm, loving in its accents, yet capable of sternest command; and its answer is, "Life will give back to you what you bring to life in purpose and resolve, only with ampler returns." That voice is the loving voice of the great Master of human service and of human destiny, who will speak to you all your lives if you will only hear him. May you always listen to that voice, and may the fruit which you shall produce and gather from life be such fruit as he shall judge worthy to remain! If these times, in some aspects, are uncertain, and the country is depressed; if the avenues for activity are less inviting than usual, and the conditions of outward success are less flattering, — in another view they are full of promise and hope. So far as society is impressed with the conviction that men can no longer thrive by pretence and shams, but by personal and honest work; that truth and honor are priceless, even in their commercial value; and that the forces which expose knavery, and punish pretence, though long delayed in their work, are certain in their effect, — it is a good time for an honest and earnest man to begin to live. It would seem that there has never been a time, for a generation, which is so full of hope to a young man who is willing to make full proof of an earnest, intelligent, courteous, and loving Christian life. The country

has been chastened. If it reaps wealth and power and culture and freedom as the fruits of the first century of its independent life, it begins the second with some just convictions that the manhood of the people and their rulers are its only security, and that truth and honor are the only reliance of a free commonwealth which hopes to remain. Go forth, then, in this time of fear and of hope, of thankfulness and of chastening,—go forth in the name of the Master, to labor in his service, and to live for his kingdom. Yield to no fear. Remember that you are not brought to this open door by your own hand. No man is self-commissioned, except he cuts himself off from God. He who has brought you to this place will guide you to the end. May we now and then hear of each one of you, that he is a high-toned and intelligent servant of his country and his time, and that the world is daily the better and the brighter for his living in it,—that his life is guided and blest by the living God! As you return hither from time to time, may we greet you as fellow-workers for all human enlightenment and progress! and when you shall return no more, as each one of you shall be called to another life, may you carry with you that fruit of life which shall remain forever, and be welcome to the home and heart of the eternal God! With these wishes and this blessing, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## IX.

### BY FAITH YE STAND.\*

"NOT FOR THAT WE HAVE DOMINION OVER YOUR FAITH, BUT ARE HELPERS OF YOUR JOY, FOR BY FAITH YE STAND."—2 Cor. i. 24.

*For by faith ye stand.*—I take this as meaning what the translators of our version understood it to mean. I give it in its connection because the preceding clauses illustrate and enforce my theme; viz., *that personal faith in the personal Christ is essential to a rounded manhood and a successful life.* By faith, and by faith only, does any man stand, in the highest and best sense of the word, as he is related to himself, to his Creator, to the present life, and to the future.

In enforcing this theme, I will first enumerate the several elements of faith, in the Christian sense of the word. I name first of all the intellectual element; viz., *the rational conviction that what we believe is true.* The fact that faith includes an intellectual element will hardly be denied. It would seem that no one could question or deny this. But many fail to do justice to the significance and importance of this truth. I must assume it to be true, that, whatever else faith may involve, it includes such an intellectual conviction as is founded on evidence. If this is so, faith cannot rest on what is sometimes called authority. This is recognized—not only conceded, but affirmed—in our text,

\* June 24, 1877.

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith." In this significant saying, the sacredness of individual conviction is solemnly affirmed. Not even an apostle dares to assert, or could possibly exercise, dominion over the faith of the humblest disciple.

It is true, the matter of faith in this particular instance concerned some question of duty rather than any revelation of truth; but it is none the less true, that these words of Paul distinctly affirm that whether our faith relates to what is to be believed or done, whatsoever is not held and acted on of faith, that is, of conviction, is sin; that every man must be fully persuaded in his own mind. The same apostle elsewhere describes his power over men to consist in commending himself to every man's conscience by manifestation of the truth. The same truth was distinctly asserted by the Master of our faith,— "To this end was I born, and for this end came I forth, that I might bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." "Every one that heareth and learneth of the Father cometh unto me." But when we assert that faith is conviction founded on light or evidence, we do not say that this is the whole of it. I do not affirm that faith is born of formal reasoning, whether demonstrative or probable. I do not forget that the things which are hidden from the wise and prudent, are revealed to babes in intellect. But I do contend that the gospel and Christ, when discerned as they are, are fitted to call forth, and, so to speak, to compel, the conviction of the honest understanding that they are true. I also assert that this individual conviction is an essential element of the faith of every individual man, so far as his intellect has any thing to do with his faith. I would add that without conviction, faith cannot exist. I have no time to prove these assertions. I may be permitted to refer



to the fact that even the current anti-Christian philosophy, at least that of the profoundest, most generous, and sagacious type, finds it necessary to declare that the unformulated convictions of men go before, and lead the way to, formulated and reasoned science, and, as ever-present and attendant, are often their correctives. Even Mr. Herbert Spencer is generous enough to explain what might seem to be a paradox; viz., that a devotee to his own theories of materialistic atheism might be a far less rational thinker than his sturdy but unschooled father, and his thoughtful but simple-hearted mother. It is essential to my purpose to add that every man's faith is measured by the number and strength of his individual convictions. A man's faith cannot be judged by the length of the written creed which he affirms with his lips, or subscribes with his hand, but by the number of the separate truths or realities which have become living convictions in his soul. It may be very important that written or spoken creeds should be assented to by teachers and learners in the kingdom and church of Christ. This I do not in the least question; but it remains an unshaken and an equally important truth, that the faith by which a man stands or falls represents only the number and strength of his personal convictions. Faith cannot rest in a form of words or a so-called system of doctrine. It goes through and behind these, and rests on the beings or facts which these words symbolize, and their import to each individual soul. Moreover, to each individual man, convictions come in a way peculiar to himself. Tried by this test, some persons who suppose their creed is very long, very exact, and very complete, would be found to be very deficient in living convictions; while others, who might hesitate long in phrasing what they believe, may be full of faith in the living God and the personal Christ.

This truth alone enables us to be very charitable in respect to intellectual or dogmatic differences, and to care much less for formulas of scholastic doctrine than for a living faith in the living God and present Christ. It gives the key to the oft-quoted saying, which is capable of an honest use, as well as a flippant abuse, —

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

Faith involves *feeling* as well as conviction. The very word conviction implies more or less of sensibility, most emphatically when the truths concerned are moral and religious. The word faith implies this even more positively. In all its applications, whether between man and truth, or man and man, or man and God, faith signifies belief strengthened and fired by emotion. This is so plain and so universally recognized, that not a few theologians resolve faith into feeling as its germinal point and essential element, making the belief to grow out of sentiment, instead of kindling and firing sentiment by belief. Mr. John Tyndall and Mr. Herbert Spencer, as is well known, are forward to exalt feeling as singly and solely the religious element in man, telling us to fill our hearts with it as full as we may, if only we will concede that religion has no possible relations to the intellect, and especially none to scientific truth. We reject this extreme, whether held by theologians or by philosophers, as leading to fanaticism with the one, and to sentimentalism with the other. We refer to it only as showing that feeling is universally recognized as being prominent as an element of faith.

Faith involves *obedience to the conscience*. Here it touches the will, the seat of character, the centre of moral life. Every truth in which we believe points to some duty. Every feeling which faith inspires impels

to the consecration of the life and the subjection of the man to the moral law. The intellect may consent to the longest and the truest creed with the most positive conviction. The heart may glow with the fervors of sentimental or fanatical ecstasy; but, if the man does not accept the eternal law of rectitude as the law of his being, the vital element of faith is wanting. The orthodoxy of the intellect is empty often in proportion to its exactness and tenacity. The fires of feeling, if impure, are baleful in proportion to the intensity with which they burn. Let it ever be remembered that the reason, and the only reason, why truth in religion is of so great consequence, is because of its tendency to form the character to spiritual perfection; or why fervor in religious love and worship should be cherished and valued, is simply and solely that it inspires to moral likeness to God.

Thus far have we given the subjective characteristics of faith in the three elements of conviction, of emotion, and of duty. Over against these, philosophy would present the true to satisfy the intellect, the beautiful to move the heart, and the good to control the will, requiring each of the three forms of faith which we have enumerated. Christianity differs from philosophy in presenting a person for our faith. This leads me to notice the fourth, as the eminently distinctive feature of the Christian faith, which is, that it *rests upon a person*. This person is more than the true, the beautiful, and the good, in that he exemplifies and enforces whatever is true and beautiful and good by his personal love and authority. Faith does not deny the forces of the universe after which science inquires, but it explains these forces by a creative and upholding Person who is the living God. It does not deny that these forces act by unchanging laws, but it finds the reason for the reign of

law in the wisdom of an eternal Thinker. It does not deny development or evolution or progress in the history of the physical or the moral or the social universe, but the more various and manifold are the evidences of a progressive and upholding plan, the more decisive is the evidence of definite thought, ardent feeling, and energetic personality. That the Creator should be a person, is suggested by the fact that personality is confessedly the highest form of being. If man is the highest of created existences, then it may be and must be that God is a person, and loves and cares for his creatures with an intensity of affection, and a force of authority, of which human love and earnestness are feeble images. If this God is so vast, so remote, and so beyond our grasp, as modern thinking makes him to be, and yet if he cares for our love and our trust, then surely there is the more reason why he should contrive a way to come among our dwellings, and make himself familiar to our thoughts and our affections; and if he would contrive this, he could effect this; and if he could do this, or desired to do this, or has done this at all, he has done it by Jesus the Christ.

If men could sin against conscience, they could sin against God. They *have* sinned against duty, and therefore have sinned against God. If God is a person, they have grieved and dishonored and offended him as truly as they have wronged their own souls. They need his forgiveness and his help, and they need the assurance of both. They have this forgiveness and this help by Jesus Christ, and the assurance and attestation of both in his life and death and present power and grace. In accepting this personal element, faith does not take leave of intellect or feeling or conscience. It neither renounces science, nor denies philosophy. It simply adds to science a needed element, and confirms

philosophy by the analogies and supports which philosophy suggests. Intellectually, the believer requires evidence, and stands upon the truth. Emotionally, he glows with feeling. Morally, he accepts duty. But personally, he worships and loves the living God, and believes in Jesus Christ, who is the fulness of the Godhead, as manifest to man. In doing this, he is none the less a man or a thinker or a philosopher. But he has become more, — he is also a believer.

I need not say that the question of our day is emphatically this: Whether faith is any longer required, whether it has not done its work at least for thinking and cultivated men, and ought now to be abandoned? It is true, this is no new question, but is as old as Christianity itself. But it comes to us in new forms, — with many it has become the confident assertion, and the shivering fear of not a few, — that whatever may have been true of the past, henceforth man must stand by manhood or thought or culture or philosophy, and no longer can, and no longer needs to, stand by faith.

*The position which I would urge is that faith is of permanent necessity to man.* The more man advances in culture, the more true will it be, and the more evident, that faith is essential to his perfection and his success. In the definitions already given, I have endeavored to state the constituents, and to bring into strong relief the one distinctive element, of faith. I proceed to show, *in the second place*, that it is only by faith as thus defined that man, and especially a thinking man, can stand.

1. Faith widens and quickens and regulates man's intellectual activity. We have already shown that faith, as an intellectual conviction, assents to the truth. Faith, therefore, cannot exist without some activity of the intellect. We do not assert that faith involves a

high degree of intellectual activity or discipline, — least of all that it is in any sense a substitute for the training of the scholar or the discipline of experience. But we do assert that it invariably excites to thought, and that its natural tendency is to quicken the intellectual life. Multitudes have found in the beginning of the life of faith the beginnings of intellectual activity. The power of Christianity to stimulate animalized and besotted communities to thought, is confessed by every sagacious observer and every honest historian. Nor does the thought which is thus awakened rest contented with elementary knowledge. It presses forward that it may master all truth. It must be convinced by evidence in respect to every thing which it is summoned to believe. This tendency may be repressed by authority, and feared by bigotry; but the fact that churches and theologians — with honest or dishonest intentions — have so sadly failed to understand the spirit of their faith, does not make this spirit a whit less free. We repeat the assertion, that, other things being equal — as knowledge and training — in any two thinkers, the Christian believer will become the widest and most liberal. If he is a true Christian, he has forsaken all for Christ for no other reason than that he believes him to be in truth sent from God. If he has this spirit, how can he avoid rendering homage to the truth wherever he finds or meets it? The same principle which holds a man in allegiance to his master in denying every false principle in purpose and in life, must nerve him to deny every false theory in science, and every mistaken interpretation in criticism. The spirit of self-denial which leads him to bear the cross, because of his faith in his Master as the Truth, will lead him to abjure every prejudice or tradition which would make error dear to his heart.

The man of faith must become a wide thinker for another reason, and that is because the truths and facts which he believes are related to every thing which can interest or arouse his intellect. The sciences of nature, when viewed in their broadest relations, must each and all terminate in questions concerning the God who is either nature or above nature. The philosophy of history either recognizes God, or denies God; and in either case it necessarily leads to the thought of God. The atheistic theory of society and progress, which is just now so fashionable in certain quarters, is a proof that science is more profound and wide-reaching than it once was, even if it thinks of God only to deny him. Atheism and Agnosticism are as truly answers to those questionings which wide and profound thinkers must propound, as are the most positive and literal dogmas of the narrowest bigot. Let a student of nature be in very deed a believer in the living God, whose eternal thinking is manifested in blazing lines of voiceless order in all the revelations of science, and whose tender love sustains all finite things with faithful care, and pulsates in every living soul with warmest sympathy—does he discern scientific truth in more and in wider, or in fewer and narrower, relations than he who sees in all this kosmos of the vast and the minute only the seething chaos of eternal strife as it settles itself continually into eternal order, or moves forward in waves of progress to the harmonious music evolved from contending and jarring discords? Or let a student of history find in its progress the development of a plan of the Father of men—does he study it under broader or narrower lights than he who must solve every problem by a few formulas borrowed from the last brilliant theorist, or enforces his conclusions by a fanatical though not over-devout invocation of the time-spirit? What must

be true in the nature of things, is showing itself more clearly to be true in the world's convictions. *Die Welt-Geschichte ist das Welt-Gericht.* This is as true of systems and principles as it is of individual men and nations. Atheistic and theistic science and culture are now emphatically on trial at the tribunal of the world's thinking and experience. It is true that atheism in science was never so confident, so courteous, and, in its own belief, so scientific, as at the present moment. On the other hand, never was it forced to confess so frankly as now that atheism relieves the mind of not a single burden of the mystery which theism involves, and that a self-existent universe of dead matter, however full of the potency and promise of life, is as difficult to accept, and harder to hold, than a self-existent and creating spirit. While there are swarms of noisy specialists in every department of thought, who fill the air with their chattering, there is everywhere heard a strong undertone on the part of sober and earnest philosophers that matter and spirit, that force and law, are alike best explained by a personal Thinker. Wherever science widens itself into philosophy, it is conceded with an emphasis of unanimity that was never heard before, that a living God is the best working hypothesis for scientific thought. In history and criticism, there is a flippant time spirit that professes to speak for the highest culture in blindest charity and in courteous phrase, albeit with an acrid mixture of contemptuous and intolerant dogmatism. But there is also an earnest and thoughtful time-spirit that represents the more sober convictions of thinking men, that God and Providence and Duty and Christ were never so attested as now.

I know that earnestness in religion may make a man narrow for the same reason that earnestness in any special sphere of thought or activity may limit his views,



and intensify his prejudices. I know also that the doctrine is inculcated in some religious schools, that to think widely, and to think earnestly, is to endanger the fervor of one's piety or the soundness of one's opinions. I admit that the Christian faith, like every other sort of faith, brings its dangers and its hinderances to the intellectual life. I admit most frankly that the chief end of man is not always to perfect his intellect, or to advance scientific truth; and still I insist that the tendency of Christian faith is to liberalize and stimulate any man who gives himself to intellectual pursuits, rather than to limit and dwarf his intellectual life. Let two men set off with equal advantages and from the same starting-point in any career of intellectual activity which is to continue for twenty years. Let the one be a sincere, uncompromising, devout, and loving Christian believer, and the other without such faith, and the Christian believer cannot but attain to a higher point of intellectual power and achievement long before the end of the race. In saying this, I do but reason from the known nature of man, and the motives and influences which bring from it the best results.

2. I observe, second, it is by faith that a man can stand in his sensibilities. We have seen that faith in every acceptation of the word includes a very large element of feeling. Faith in the Christian sense is pre-eminently emotional, for the reason that it is fixed directly upon a Person who is at once the most perfect and the most unpretending, the loftiest and the lowliest, the mildest and the sternest, the most forgiving and the most uncompromising, the most ideal and the most real, the most divine and the most human, who was ever imagined, or ever lived. Abstractions and ideals may rouse and satisfy the intellect, but the heart demands a Person. Do I need to say that the Christ of the Christian faith

meets every one of the heart's demands? Why should I when those who reject his historic truth and his supernatural claims are not only ready to concede, but are foremost to contend, that he is the most consummate product of the human imagination in its utmost reach of effort to satisfy the longings of the human heart? But the heart cannot live and be shaped by ideals or abstractions, and therefore the heart of man can only stand by faith in a living person. Look at its needs. First of all, the subtle demon of selfishness must be drawn out or dragged out of his remotest hiding-places in the centre of man's being, and this can only be done by a strong personal force from without. Then every special impulse and passion, from the most debasing appetite up to "the last infirmity of the noblest minds," is to be tamed and regulated, till that self-poise and self-control, which all men long for, and hope to attain, like birds of calm shall so brood on the stormy waves of passion that they are charmed to rest. The experience of the world ought to have taught the world by this time that neither self-relying resolves nor sternest self-discipline will do this. The world has learned, or ought to have learned, that personal love as between man and man is the mightiest force that can move and win the heart. The loving eye of a gentle child or a faithful mother has a reforming power which can tame and subdue raging hatred and stubborn sullenness. Every Christian household can furnish some living example of an inmate who has been transformed to sweeter love and mellowed self-control by faith in the personal Christ, such as otherwise could never have been attained. Christian burial-places scattered by thousands all over the earth are watched by the loving eye of God, in which repose the dust of myriads of meek and loving souls who would never have been formed to the loving tempers and gov-

earned appetites and conquered pride for which their memory is blessed, except by faith in this personal Christ. Nor is it alone in the exercise of the gentler and loving affections that this faith is the only resource. In the collisions and strifes of gain and ambition, in the misunderstandings and jealousies which are inevitable to opposing interests, in the dogmatisms and criticisms which are incident to the purest and holiest causes,—such as are not unknown in schools of science, or academies of letters; such as are most conspicuous because most out of place in the Church and kingdom of Christ,—nothing short of the reproving eye and the rebuking word of a master like Christ can avail. It is only in the school of Christ that a man can learn to be angry, and sin not, to be stern in opposition to evil principles and to evil men, and yet be gentle and patient, and easy to be entreated. We are not to forget that in this world we shall ever be called to set ourselves sternly and steadfastly against falsehood and selfishness and treachery, that we shall often be summoned bravely to defend the right, and fearlessly to expose and to resist the wrong. To do this with gentleness and courtesy on the one hand, and with self-respect and, if it need be, with indignation on the other, is reserved for those who, however earnestly and boldly and indignantly they strive, are ever mindful that the eye of the patient and loving Jesus is upon them.

This leads me to add as not unimportant, that faith in the personal Christ is essential to *faith in man*. It is significantly said of the Master, *that he knew what was in man*, and yet he loved man, and even trusted man. It is esteemed in these days the highest achievement, if not the necessary completion, of a man's training, that he should learn to distrust men in order that he may manage men. The world of business, and, to a large

extent, the world of science and letters, of politics and professional life, is divided into two classes, — the sharp and critical and hard men, and the so-called weak and confiding men whom the world treads down with its iron heel, or passes by with supercilious neglect. The sharp men make it a rule to criticise and distrust everybody: the confiding men learn, by being often deceived, in their turn to distrust and to hate. The tendency of our times is to idolize sharpness and criticism, and to sacrifice at their altar the generousities and charities and graces of life, as also the divine sweetness of that charity that believeth all things, and endureth all things. I know of no force that will fill the heart of an individual with courage and self-reliance on the one hand, and with sweetness and light on the other, that will bind man to man in the noble magnanimity of a wise but generous faith, except a living faith in the living Christ.

This leads me to notice that personal faith in Christ trains and stimulates to the finest and most perfect culture, whether in manners, literature, or art. There can be no question that the best achievements in art and literature have been the offspring of such a faith. To the highest of such achievements, two elements are essential, — the enthusiasm that inspires, and the judgment that criticises and restrains. Criticism now rules the day. To question is now in fashion rather than to create, to revise what has been achieved rather than to open the mind with generous readiness to new impressions from nature or from God. Admiration, hope, and love are just now at a discount; and instead of them, we have brilliant but heartless laudations of sweetness and light. It remains to be seen whether any great products in literature or art will proceed from this critical and negative mood. But should some new

and powerful revelations be made to the world of the glory of the kingdom and the person of Christ, we cannot doubt that art and literature will also be inspired with fresh enthusiasm, that they will again put on their singing robes, and that culture will adorn herself with heightened, although it may be with more unstudied, graces.

It is by faith that man stands strongly and wisely *in duty*. Here the old question returns, If a man has faith in duty, what need is there also of faith in a person who can only exemplify and enforce duty? Because, we reply, a person who exemplifies duty is more attractive and powerful than any abstract law of duty; because duty is not a cold, unsocial, loveless impulse, but is personal, sympathetic, and social; because love is not the love of goodness in the abstract, but the love of goodness as impersonated; because duty looks up to whatever is higher than itself, and prompts to reverence and worship, — the goodness which is grander and greater than itself, — and in its own nature delights in faith and loyalty. Duty, therefore, is, by the necessity of its nature, inspired by examples of goodness, and delights in the law of the perfect and reigning God. Duty is not duty if it does not blossom into faith. No man can be loyal to conscience who is not also loyal to the loving and living Jesus. Did we already stand in duty, were conscience loved and obeyed with spontaneous alacrity, we should welcome with delight the example of one higher and better than ourselves, whose superior power and knowledge would make duty to glow with an intenser brightness. We should rush to his embrace with irrepressible sympathy, and look up into his face with unspeakable delight. Did we accept the law of duty as supreme, we should find additional impulse and pleasure in obeying it, because it was also his will.

Were any influence needed to strengthen us in temptation, or to deter us from sin, the thought that we might forfeit the sympathy of a person so high and good, or cross his will, would surely tend to hold us to our fidelity. Much more must this be true if this Being is not only higher in his capacities than we, but if he had formed us by his power, and blessed us with his loving care, and longed for our sympathy and gratitude. There are those who think and say that to stand in duty or be confirmed in duty by motives like these, is to admit a debasing alloy of mercenary motives; and therefore they reject faith altogether, as not only needless, but degrading to duty itself. They forget, that, as duty prompts to love from man to man, so it cannot withhold worship from man to God. They forget that the soul animated by the principle of duty must rejoice and accept the inspiration and blessing that come from the utterance of duty as the eternal law of God. In one word, they forget that they are finite and dependent, that as creatures they are made for worship, and as loyal subjects they cannot but accept and rejoice in the reign of a personal God. In other words, they forget that no man can stand in duty who does not also stand in worship, in gratitude, in prayer, or, to sum all in one phrase, who does not stand in faith.

But none of us stands in duty. The conscience which we reverence, and seek to obey, condemns us. We have lost the sympathy of the Perfect One. If it is right for him to enact the law of duty as the law of his kingdom, we have broken that law; and the displeasure of the best of beings rests upon us, just because and just so far as we condemn ourselves. We need help and hope. Our help is to come from hope. But hope can come only from without. Whatever might be true of us, had we stood fast, the fact is, that we are fallen.

And now there comes to us the personal Christ, assuring of his sympathy by words such as never man spake, attesting it by his death, opening us certain victory over all moral evil, and promising so to guide and train us that when he shall appear, we shall be like himself, and stand perfected in duty, after the likeness of God. By what other agency can a being like man, such as we know ourselves to be, expect to stand in duty in this life and the future, except by faith in the unselfish, the compassionate, the loving, living, dying, rising, ascended, and reigning Son of God, in which faith millions of our race have fought the good fight, and been gathered to the assembly of the perfected spirits of the just?

If a man in his *character* stands best by faith, the same will be true of the *life* which his faith shall form. If faith is the condition of a rounded and perfected and redeemed manhood, much more is it the condition of a successful life. Faith will give a man a definite plan of life. The believer in a personal Christ knows what he lives for and aims at. The example of his Master is always intelligible and clear. His precepts are explicit, his spirit cannot be mistaken. If his service involves self-denial, its rules are plain. If a man follow him, he shall, at least, not walk in darkness. His life will also be self-consistent, for it will be in harmony with the reality of things. It will enable him to penetrate through the most specious illusions, and to see their transparency; and therefore it will give him always a solid footing and a firm tread. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely. Faith also pours fresh inspiration into the life. The springs of action are never relaxed to the man who gazes with the open eye on the ever-present Christ. The world is always fresh and stimulating to the man who values it supremely as a place in which to serve his Master. The dawn of every

morning rises with fresh hope, and the twilight of every evening fades with new promise. His expectations indeed include conflict and sorrow and sickness and death, but he cannot be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord. His life is progressive. Life can never be otherwise to him, who, in the eagerness of his faith, forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to the things which are before. Its consummation is glorious. The man of faith knows not in detail what he shall be, or what is the nature of the future life. But he knows that he shall be like his Master, because he shall see him as he is. He also knows that he shall be forever satisfied when he awakes in that likeness of him whom his faith has loved and longed for. Wherever he is, or whatever he does, whatever he may enjoy, or whatever he may suffer, he has always a broad and firm standing-place, for he stands by faith.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class*,—I commend these thoughts to you, as pertinent to the times in which you live, and the active and thinking world into which you are about to enter. Hitherto you have looked out upon this world through the loopholes of this sequestered retreat, not unaware, indeed, of the great movements without, and responding to them somewhat with a scholar's sensitive sympathy. But, however quick and responsive has been this sympathy, it is one thing to gaze at a conflict from a distant height, and another to go single-handed into the contest, man against man. You have also been more occupied with the discipline and the excitements of your college days, than with the formation of a definite theory of life. And yet each one of you has been maturing such a theory, consciously or unconsciously, and is going forth



to apply it in action. It is at this moment, just as you are awaking to the conviction that you must have a theory, and are asking yourselves what it is, that, in almost the last words of counsel and friendship which I shall speak to you, I have endeavored to indicate the place which an intelligent and earnest Christian faith should hold in your theory of manhood and of action. It would not be strange if, in these days of flippant dogmatism in philosophy and of Bohemian conceit in literature, the faith of some of you were unsettled, and the high and fervent enthusiasm of some who believe were lowered. Of one thing be assured, that no calamity can befall a scholar so serious as the loss of personal faith in the living God and the Christ who has inspired all that we most value in the sentiments of modern literature and modern life. If a man must struggle with modern doubt, let him struggle alone, and with a manly and earnest spirit, as a drowning man struggles for a firm standing-place. Avoid, as the breath of the pestilence, the sneering or confident assumption, that faith in eternal and sacred verities — nay, rather, in living persons and supernatural revelations — must give way before the severer light of modern thinking, and with it must go the cheerful hope of an immortal life. The assertion is false. While modern thinking in narrow fields may shut up some of its devotees to conclusions as positive as they are narrow, it more certainly than ever, when prosecuted in a liberal spirit, opens the mind to vistas of thought in every direction, which lead the soul to a personal God who is personally interested in man. Avoid, as still more dangerous, the impression that an unsettled faith, or cherished dalliance with one's religious convictions, is a sign of intellectual courage or strength. Unbelief is quite as often as cowardly as it is brave. It hesitates often because "I dare not" waits

upon "I would." Nothing can possibly be more injurious to the intellect than a prolonged hesitation to face questions of this sort, and to settle them in a manly spirit. Nothing can be more unmanly than to play hide and seek with arguments for and against the most important verities, or more servile than to wait for new revelations from some idolized leader of opinion. Nothing can be worse for the heart of the scholar than the withdrawal from the heavens of the living God, and the banishment from the earth of the Christ who blessed and redeemed it; for when God and Christ depart from the faith of the thinker, his tenderness for man, his hope for man, his faith in man, and his patience with man, are likely to follow sooner or later. Even his sensibility to culture will become less and less refined, or less and less satisfying. Nothing can be worse for the conscience than that the majestic presence of God should cease to enforce its often feeble and vacillating commands. Nothing can be more harmful to the life of a man of intellectual consistency than that faith should wholly die out of it, and cease to be the spring of its activities, its joys and hopes. And, as for the community, one shudders with not unreasonable horror at the very thought of what will come, if the atheistic theories with which the thinker of these days beguiles his readers, or amuses himself, are once put in practice by the men of labor and of action. The least we can say is, that what seems as harmless as the summer lightning when manipulated in the brilliant experiments and theories of the teacher, may rend and consume the social structure which the faith of generations has reared and sustained.

I exhort you, therefore, to prize most highly, and to seek most earnestly, a living faith. No man can give it you. Each one must find it for himself. No man

can impose it on you. We would not, if we could, have dominion over this faith. But God can help you, if you prize the gift enough to ask him earnestly and continuously for his blessing in this, the most important interest of your life. Cherish what faith you have, not in a spirit of blindness or servility or bigotry, or sectarian narrowness; but with open-eyed candor, with manly self-reliance, with catholic liberality, accept what truth God reveals to you, and translate it into your life. Let your faith in truth become fidelity to duty. Let your obedience to conscience become allegiance to God. At a time when to doubt is so much the fashion, and so many men of culture in consequence are

"As sad as night,  
Only for wantonness,"

do you dare to be what you believe, in purpose, in feeling, and in action.

What the world is waiting for, is more simplicity and earnestness of Christian faith on the part of the men who direct the world's thinking, and inspire its feeling and action. It is not argument or speculation, it is not outward activity nor popular demonstration, it is not social excitement nor sensational harangues, it is not money, it is not labor, that the world needs; but it is such a present sense of God's fatherly sympathy, of his forgiving mercy, and of his guiding providence, and such a vivid and reverent apprehension of Christ as God revealed to men, as shall cause men indeed to stand in intellectual power, in human affection, and fidelity to duty. May each of you thus stand, and may I share in your joy! In these words I include my best wishes, and bid you farewell.

## X.

### *THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.\**

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE." — *John viii. 12.*

CHRIST claimed very much for himself when he uttered these sayings. He claimed so much, that many of his hearers were offended at what they conceived to be either insane or blasphemous words. Those who believed him the most, and loved him the best, did not and could not comprehend their reach and import. But, in saying so much to try the faith of the world, Christ furnished ample materials with which to confirm the faith of the world; for he clearly foresaw, and dared to say, what eighteen centuries have ever since been proving to be true. During all these centuries, as all confess, Christ has been the light of the world, shining more brightly, enlightening more variously, glowing more intensely, as the generations have gone and come. It is true, this light has always shone in darkness; and it is also true, that the darkness has uniformly failed to comprehend it. Ignorance has often well-nigh extinguished this light; foul exhalations have been kindled by it into the blaze of wild enthusiasms, and fierce fanaticisms; the stifling atmosphere of bigotry and ignorance has caused it often to burn low and dim. At times, it has been hard to say whether friends or foes have done

\* *June 23, 1878.*

the most to extinguish it. But just at these critical moments, it has proved mightier than foes or friends, and has suddenly shot up into a brighter and an intenser flame. We do not deny that Christ has occasioned much evil. Every discerning student of history knows that he has been the cause of much good. Not only has he consumed the evil which he found in the world, but, what is peculiar and surprising, he has taught the world to discern and abandon the very evils of which he has been the occasion, as the sun as it advances burns up the clouds, which it had at first raised from the damp and reeking earth.

Much of the darkness of our times, among thoughtful men at least, is the doubt whether Christ is any longer required as the light of the world, — whether he has not made it so bright, that it can dispense with his shining. Not a few of the men of science and culture are thinking and saying nowadays, “We accept and glory in the Christian spirit, the Christian ethics, and the Christian civilization; but we have outgrown any occasion for the personal Christ, as the guide and inspirer of our personal life.” There may be darkness where there may seem to be light, — a darkness which in some sense proceeds from the light. The cloud which is penetrated and filled with the shining from the sun which is above it, would be dark and damp and chill were the sun withdrawn; and yet the cloud may obscure, and even hide, the disk from which the light proceeds. So is it with the illumination of our times, when it hides from men of thought and culture the place which Christ holds as the world’s light. Every age has its own peculiar need of Christ. Christ has a special service for every class of men in every age. Men of thought and culture aspire to lead the present age, and with reason. Let me ask your attention to

several particulars in which Christ is needed by them pre-eminently in this present generation, and in consequence of its science and culture.

1. Christ is the light of the world because he brings God very near, and makes him very real to man. He is needed at the present time to counteract those influences of modern science and culture which make him distant and unreal. Modern science ought to be intensely and peculiarly theistic. It is, so far as it understands itself. It is everywhere assuming the presence, and finding the proofs, of one omnipresent thinker, in the great and the small, in the remote and in the near. Every scientific discoverer and observer more than half acknowledges that he interprets the arrangements of a supreme intelligence. As they construct their theories, they seem to re-create some portion of the universe. As their theories of a part of it carry them necessarily into what is beyond, they reach out their hands after a creator of the whole, mightier and more knowing than themselves. As they trace a part or the whole of the history of the growth from star-dust to the finished Kosmos, it is the plan and the plot of the master-mind which is unconsciously confessed, and gives zest and credibility to the exciting drama of evolution. As they predict the future, they rest with secure confidence in an orderly and ever-present wisdom. And yet it is very easy to leave out of view these higher relations of scientific thinking; to stop with force and law, and not go on to the agent who is assumed in both. The fact is unquestioned, that avowed and speculative atheism has of late come into sudden fashion and favor. Why this should be, if science legitimately leads to God, and implies God, is explained by the slowness of the human imagination to accept the teachings of reason. In the midst of man's discoveries of the vastness of the universe; of its lines

of order, running far and near; of the majestic thoughts which are petrified in its past history, or palpitate in its present life, or are ready to spring into being in the future,—the scientific thinker is stunned into impotence of faith before the visions which his own spells have raised. His imagination stands aghast at the enormous distances which his sober thoughts reveal. It cannot make real and practical the sublime and subtile forces whose secret chains it has unlocked, nor the wondrous agents which it follows backward in their sublime evolutions, and forward to their splendid future. Hence, when it comes into the very antechamber of His presence, it falters and disowns, if it does not deny, the God whom reason recognizes, and science requires. Or, it becomes so intent upon its special activities as to engross and narrow itself with some specialty, which is farther from the suggestion of God than the wider and freer study of Nature to which the savage is forced. And yet atheism brings darkness into every mind that accepts it. It may not interfere with skill and success in a limited department of research; but it is always held at the expense of liberal thinking, and so far to the damage of true culture. Atheism may possibly now and then perfect man as a thinking and observing machine; but atheism has never yet brought a single ray of light into the mind, nor glow into the heart. It has never added either strength or clearness to science or philosophy. Theistic scientists, and men of culture, are, to say the least, as brave thinkers and as broad thinkers and as enlightened thinkers, each in their own departments, as those who deny God and Providence and Prayer. But the philosopher is more than the scientist, and the man is more than either; and we fearlessly assert, that, as philosophers and as men, the theists are broader and braver and nobler.

Christ teaches no science, and inculcates no philosophy; and yet he is a light to both science and philosophy, not by what he teaches, but by what he is. He simply manifests God as living and personal, and fills the universe to the believing imagination and the loving heart with a sense of his presence. He comes among men in human relations, and addresses human sympathies; but in so doing, he makes the living God never so near, and at a time when, to human thought, he seemed never so far. He forces the imagination and heart to help, rather than hinder, the reason, by going in and out among our human habitations, and speaking from human lips. He not only tells us that we have a Father in heaven, but he declares that he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father. He emphasizes the personality of God by living an intensely personal human life, in order that he might carry into the realm behind and beyond the sensible such an attestation of God that all men forever afterward, as they should look doubtfully into the sky, might have the courage and the warrant to say, "*Our Father who art in heaven;*" and that, as they should go from their prayers to their studies of Nature, they might never lose sight or thought of the God whom Nature hides, and yet reveals. The men of science and culture, by their own confession, need this help as truly; nay, more emphatically, than the men of any other times. Hence Christ is more conspicuously than ever the light of the world as there stream from him throughout the universe,—in the near and the far, in the past and the future,—rays of intelligence and love.

In asserting that Christ in this way gives light and aid to science, we do not set up Christ as a teacher of science, or array blind faith against discerning reason. We do not dispense with thought, or deny thought. We neither resist nor reject experiment. Least of all



do we take the preposterous position that one set of truths may be set over against another, and each shine by its own light. We simply assert that Christ calls and holds the attention of the man to the truths concerning God which science assumes and confirms with such force and pathos as make it impossible for man to forget or overlook them.

2. Christ confirms man's confidence in man's power to know the truth. Christ teaches caution and docility, and a certain quality of self-distrust; but he couples with this the quality of clear and tenacious conviction. He knows nothing of that fashionable scepticism which suggests that knowledge is but uncertain guess-work, that thinking is a changing product of a material organization, that the truths of one generation are but the dreams of the next, that even the axioms of science are physiological phenomena, that God is a being to be guessed about and never guessed aright, or that the processes by which we know are as untrustworthy as the processes by which we question them. All suggestions of this description, which have been more or less obtrusive in all times, and were never more subtle or more imposing than in these times, are utterly foreign to the school of thinking in which Christ is the light. The capacity of man to know the truth, and the obligation of man to believe it, and to defend it, and, if need be, to die for it, is most distinctly recognized, and most positively enforced, by him. The darkness and bewilderment of the real or affected scepticism of modern thinking find no countenance in the school of Christ. Bigotry and intolerance and fanaticism and uncharitableness may have often ventured within the doors of that school; but agnosticism and scepticism could never endure the eye of the Master, who calls himself the Truth, and declares, "To this end was I born, that I

might bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice." It is fashionable in these days to speak and think of Christian believers as committed to a creed, and as, therefore, incapable of new ideas. To one conviction they are all committed—and that is worth more than men are apt to think; and that is the conviction that truth is possible to man, and that he is bound to attain it. Whatever have been the cross and bewildering lights that have streamed out from Christ upon the darkness of successive generations, this one ray has been steady and clear. Perhaps it was never more needed than now, when distrust of man's capacity to know what he needs most to know has been hardened into a philosophy, and consecrated into a faith, and when both philosophy and faith are chanted as a liturgy in the daily orisons of myriads of the devotees of modern culture.

3. Christ asserts for man his true dignity and his rightful place in the universe of matter and of spirit. There is no single point in respect to which Christ has wrought so complete a revolution as in respect to the dignity and worth of the individual man. He effected this change, not by teaching a new philosophy, but by living a new life, and consecrating that life by his pitying death. He came to save man, not because man was wise or worthy, but because he was ignorant and lost, and yet could be exalted to wisdom and holiness. Therein did he declare that the lowliest and the most simple have an intrinsic worth in the judgment of God, such as the world had never before accorded to man as man. It was the reproach of Christ, that he consorted with publicans and sinners. His eating with them, however, did not signify that he sympathized with them as they were, but that he knew what they might become. To accomplish his work for man, Christ not only

was found in fashion as a man, but, being such, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death — even the death of the cross. In this he attested still more strikingly what manhood, as manhood, is worth in the judgment of God. It is not surprising that the light that streamed from Christ's life and death slowly but surely effected changes so great in all the estimates that Christendom has learned to put upon man. Before Christ the impulse prevailed which we feel when we compare man with the infinitude of Nature, and exclaim, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, the son of man that thou visitest him?" When, too, the practical and solid thinkers of the old times considered man in his relations to the state or to his race, they reasoned thus: "The state or the race remains. The individual perishes." And their hearts said, "Let him go. Of what worth is he?" As they looked at a single individual as one of scores of past generations, perhaps barbarous and brutal, or of they knew not how many generations in the future, these cultured and godlike men said, "What is one among so many, when God will surely forget every one of us? The great God could not keep us all in mind, if he would; and he would not if he could." So concluded and so felt the ancient men of culture, and we moderns have a thousand reasons to one of theirs for similar conclusions. And yet Christ has reversed all these estimates of man as a race and as an individual. He emphasized each man's personality by recognizing his responsibility to himself and to his God. Man, as seen in the light of Christ's presence and of Christ's life, is capable of a character; and hence he has individual worth. He is a child of his Father in heaven, and may be loyal, grateful, and obedient, and

hence is capable of filial communion and his Father's blessing, or disobedient and ungrateful and rebellious, cursing himself that he receives and deserves his Father's frown. As responsible, he is capable of personal rights from his fellows and his Creator, as the conditions of the exercise of his moral freedom, and the development of that character, which is the end of his being. As capable of a character, and endowed with rights, he is made king over Nature, being made in God's image. "Thou hast put all things under his feet." The education of man is the supreme end for which Nature exists, and Society goes on. In the light of Christ's mission, we interpret human history as the unfolding of the plan of God for the education of man. This education, as soon as man is known to be a sinner, becomes a story of redemption. This gives us the key to a rational and a Christian philosophy of history. This retrospect of the past, viewed from this standpoint, opens to us the long vistas of the future in our rational anticipations of human progress, and fixes our confidence in the triumphs of the kingdom of God. These views of the past and future for man give to all the developments of science and culture, of art and letters, a rational as well as a pathetic interest, because of their important service in the furthering and adorning that tabernacle of God which shall sooner or later be set up with men, when he shall dwell with them, and be their God.

These conceptions and faiths concerning man's dignity and destiny are all distinctively Christian. They have slowly but surely penetrated and displaced the darkness which had preceded. They have found expression and lodgement in the ethics, the politics, the jurisprudence, the arts, and manners of Christendom. What we call Christian civilization is either flower or fruit of

these faiths in respect to man's place in Nature and in the plan of God.

It is now proposed to change all this; to set up a new philosophy of man's place in Nature and history; to find altogether another place for man, and all that concerns man. Man, we are taught, is simply the product of Nature, and, as such, obeys the workings of the elements from which he springs. So far from being the end of Nature's development, or the consummation of her works, Nature makes man to destroy him, and displace him by that which is higher and better. She breaks every mould and every vessel as fast as she perfects them; and, when she shall have gone through the round of her struggling forces, she will cast both moulds and vessels into a heap of ruins, to begin again the work of evolving order from chaos. Personality in man and character are poetic abstractions, which are the chance growth of his environment. Right and wrong are the products of social forces. Conscience is but the reflex of the average judgments and the dominant sentiments of the community in which we have been trained. The rights of the individual man have no existence as against the community, and may on occasion be properly trampled on, as a priceless gem is shattered by a horse's hoof. The history of man is a story of blind struggles, in which there is no law, except that the strongest force should prevail over the weaker, either singly or in combination. Prophecy holds out no hope, except that in the future the combinations of the many may work more favorably for the individual; but, if they do not, we must take facts as we find them, and let our sentimentalities go, which are quite unworthy to be considered by a philosopher. Man is neither the beginning nor the end of the universe, and it is time that he should be taught to moderate his expectations and his claims.

Our protests against injustice and wrong are irrational emotions, as vain as they are noisy. Our indignant anger against tyranny and fraud, our agonizing appeals to a just God, our unquenched and unquenchable assertions that the right must and shall triumph at the last, are as insignificant of any truth or fact as the sad sighing of the wind-harp, or the majestic roar of the sounding surf.

That this new philosophy of man and of his history must be inhuman in its practical influence, need not be argued. For a while it may recognize the beneficent forces of our adjusted civilization, as sustaining the equilibrium of society. It may visit the sick, and sympathize with the poor, and educate the ignorant, and defend the wronged, and seek to elevate the masses. But the new science of man, in the long-run, must be logical. Its practice must conform to its principles. That philosophy which degrades man in its theories will be prepared to oppress and despise and curse him when he asserts his rights. But our danger lies not in this direction. It will come, if it comes at all, from the masses themselves, who are quick to receive a philosophy that teaches them that the right of the strongest is the only right which Nature sanctions, and trains them to infer that, therefore, capital and civilization and culture and religion are all outrages against the scientific view of man. May God spare any of us from witnessing the horrors that will ensue when insane enthusiasts or maddened criminals act out the new views of man's duty and destiny which are taught in some philosophical schools! After the scenes of horror shall be over, and society shall begin to re-organize itself, we are confident that Christ will be the guiding and blessing light of its schools of thought.

4. Christ is the light of human culture, in that he

both stimulates and refines it. Under culture we include whatever expresses human thought and feeling, as art and literature and manners. We have considered the light which Christ lends to theoretical and practical science. We proceed, by a natural transition, to consider its manifestations in culture. All that we need say of what Christ has done in the past, is comprehended in a word. So far as art and literature are concerned, we may concede that Greece gave to the world the perfection of form; and yet we may hold that Christ breathed into these forms a higher living soul, just so far as the Christian spirit is better and nobler than the pagan. For manners, which are kindred to art, Christ has done still more than for culture. The graces of modern life are more numerous and more precious than we know of. Its nameless comforts, its delightful amenities, its secure confidences, its precious friendships, its ingenious and exhaustless devices for elegance and refinement in the expression of our thoughts and feelings, we cannot easily over-estimate. So far as these are Christian, they are products of that unselfish, sympathizing, condescending, forgiving, patient Son of man who dwelt for a few years in the cities and villages of Palestine, but whose spirit and words, whose deeds and ways, have been ever since refining all the ideals of mankind and the manifold media by which these ideals can be expressed. No sooner is Christ received in any community, no sooner is there a new sense of his loving presence in a community that had forgotten him, than the unbought graces of life are assumed, as by a natural consequence. No sooner do wealth and leisure allow, than culture is accepted as a duty, and art and letters are sought for,—if for no other motive than as a grateful homage of love and honor to Christ.

But culture is exposed to its own dangers. It tends

to degeneracy so soon and so fast as it becomes an end, and not a means. Art becomes insincere and factitious, eloquence affected and overstrained, literature artificial and sensational, and manners untrue and exaggerated. Culture is substituted for duty, or made an excuse for sin, or a tempter to evil, often with insidious power and terrific effects. It cannot be denied that culture in our times is exposed to these evils, and that these evils are serious in their influences. Some of its devotees are too dainty in their tastes to do the work of life to which they are called. Not a few sink into unmanly fastidiousness or selfish luxuriousness. Some withdraw themselves from contact with their kind in sensitive timidity or proud disdain.

Christ reforms these abuses, and corrects these degeneracies. He justifies no man in self-culture as an end; for in his school no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Tried by this standard, culture in all its forms takes a fitting place in the estimates of the individual and of the community. It is hallowed by the consecration of duty. It is spiritualized and refined by the presence and approval of the Master. The school of Christ is never congenial to extravagances of art, to insincerities of thought, to exaggerations of expression, or affectations of manners. When circumstances favor, cultured sensibility to beauty in Nature and Art is fostered as a Christian virtue; but extravagances and excesses of morbid or selfish dilettanteism are subdued and shamed by the very presence of Him who is the light of the world.

5. Christ makes clear and possible to man another and a better life. Through the opened doors of that immortality which he has brought to light by means of his gospel, there has streamed ever since a steady radiance, toward which the hearts of all men have turned with



thankfulness and hope. Christ has done for immortality what he has done for theism. He has not demonstrated it to the reason, but he has verified it as a fact. He has not superseded the necessity of searching and scrutinizing its possibility or probability on grounds of reason, but he has enforced these demonstrations by the best attested events of human history; and he stands before the rational faith of men declaring afresh to all the generations, "I am He that liveth and was dead," and "Behold, I am alive forevermore," and "Because I live, ye shall live also." In former times men were esteemed profound and aspiring and brave and strong, according as they reflected about another life, and longed for it, and gathered courage from it, and were ennobled by it. In these times man is counted shallow if he accepts it, in the light of the vastness of the universe and the insignificance of man; and sordid if he derives motives from it; and cowardly if he cannot brave death without it; and weak if he cannot substitute for it the immortality of his thoughts and purposes and words, as repeated in other minds.

This seems unnatural and inhuman — that at the very moment when life on the earth is most attractive and rich in its resources, it should be deemed a sign of the wisest judgment to be content to cease to act and think and aspire and enjoy, and of the most generous spirit to give up the hope or certainty of consciously loving and being consciously loved. It cannot be explained by any ordinary theory of human nature. It is the enforced product of a remorseless logic, such as tyrannizes over men of speculation, and forces them to imagine they accept the conclusions to which their reasonings lead. It is the cant of a clique to attempt to silence the protesting outcry of every longing of man with the dogmatic sneer of sentimentalism. It

may be that sentimentalism has as much to do with rejecting as with accepting immortality — the sentimentalism of that proud and selfish isolation, of which men of thought and culture alone are capable, which disdains immortality as a gift or a motive if it can be had and enjoyed only in the manifold glories of an ever-present God, whom the soul must adore and love, in order that it may be blessed.

The fact that immortality is questioned and disdained in our times by so many men of thought and culture, is a striking proof that the risen and personal Christ is as much needed as ever as the light of the world. When science becomes more simple and earnest and comprehensive, and culture more sincere and humane, both will turn again to the same Christ with an allegiance as single as reason and faith when united can enforce, and a love as glowing and ardent as human nature can render and yet live.

6. Christ gives worth and significance to the life-work of every individual man. There is a strong tendency among men of science and culture to depreciate, and be disgusted with, the present life. I do not know that we ought to be surprised that it should be regarded with weariness and disgust when viewed under certain lights. If there is no God but Nature; if Nature is locked in the bonds of fate; if knowledge itself is but guess-work, or its certainties are limited to the finite relations of material force and mathematical quantity; if man is but the product and the sport of agencies that feel not when they seem to think; if the activities of science and the delights of culture have disappointed and perhaps disgusted their votaries to satiety; if youthful romances and old ambitions have both been disappointed, — then no wonder that life itself seems hardly worth living, for what life itself can give. At best it

becomes a dull farce or a weary tragedy ; and, whether it is either, the play had better be over. If another life is disbelieved as unworthy of credence, or rejected with contemptuous disdain, then life is a bewildered dream, from which there is no waking ; and the sooner we sink into a dreamless sleep, the better. The weary brain, the disappointed heart, the vacant because worn-out sensibilities, the wronged affections, the raging hatreds, the pining envies, the embittered jealousies, long for rest in the extinction of being. This creed of contempt and despair toward our daily life is now taught as a philosophy, and propagated as a gospel, by grave teachers of speculative philosophy, and made attractive to the imagination by poets and novelists. It is caught up with equal ardor by frivolous romancers, to whom life is young, and by wearied and disgusted veterans, whose romances are all played out.

Christ gives worth and meaning to man's earthly life. Under the light which he casts upon them, no event is insignificant, no joy is empty, no sorrow could be spared. The hopes and regrets of the humblest life, its successes and its defeats, its strifes and its reconciliations, are all appointed and all accepted as steps of discipline for the immortal life to which they lead. Each minutest event is ordered by his providence. Every trivial joy is hallowed and sanctioned by his smile. Each trifling disappointment and every heart-breaking sorrow is alleviated by his sympathy. To each individual man a place in life is assigned, if he will be content to occupy it. To every man, success in life is certain, if he rightly estimates success. In the humblest dwellings, and in the obscurest corners, the noblest, the most successful, and the most honorable lives are lived as truly as along the widest avenues and beneath the gaze of myriads of admiring eyes. Every life which Christ guides by his

light, and cheers by his smile, and crowns with his forgiveness and his blessing, is thoroughly worth living for its experiences and its rewards.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class*,—I have presented to you these thoughts as appropriate to your college life, which is now so near its close, and to the active life upon which you are so soon to enter. You have been trained in a Christian college,—a college bearing upon its seal the motto *Lux et Veritas*, which points directly to Christ as the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. If the positions of this discourse are true, a Christian college involves no contradiction in terms, and no incompatibility in fact. You have not found it to imply that science is not independent and free, that truth of every sort should not be welcomed, that arguments from every quarter should not be critically examined, and that conclusions in every department of knowledge and of thought should not stand or fall by appropriate evidence. But you have been taught that what a man believes concerning duty and God cannot but exert a powerful influence in determining what kinds of truth he thinks about, and how he thinks and reasons in respect to it. You have been taught that no truth has relations so important to abstract science, and all the sciences of Nature, as Christian theism; and that no forces have been, and are still, so potent in all those sciences and forms of culture which relate to man as what we call Christian ideas. You have also been taught that these ideas were incarnated in the person, and lived in the life, and illustrated by the death, of the Christ from whom the holiest and the most attractive influences still continue to flow over every interest of modern life. As you stand together for the last time in this place of Christian worship, let

me gather these manifold and oft-repeated lessons into one earnest injunction, and charge you to seek to make your conceptions of the universe, of man, of culture, of the future life, and the present, characteristically and earnestly Christian. You cannot, and you ought not to, hide from yourselves the fact that in many schools and studies a bold or disguised atheism is taught and held, and that, by sheer effrontery on the one side, and plausible disguises on the other, it is moving aggressively upon our current science and culture. Do not fear it. Do not fear to think, lest it shall ensnare or overcome you. Do not fear to think by the light and help of Christian convictions on the one side, and with a candid and penetrating logic on the other. Be assured, that, if you do, the darkness will flee from your minds, that your faith and knowledge will lend to one another a blended light, which shall continue to brighten unto the open vision of the perfect day.

Remember, also, that what you believe, will depend very largely upon what you are ; that light in your convictions and in your hopes will be more or less affected by that which you follow in your lives. Listen again to the words of promise and of hope : "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." How clear, how sweet, how assuring, are words like these in an hour like this, as you know not what is before you, and as the uncertainties of the future are deepened when you look forward to them through the tears which will gather in the eyes which look so fondly, so regretfully, upon the brightness of the past ! No more assuring words than these have ever fallen upon human ears ; none from lips that spoke with such claims to be believed and obeyed ; none that have been confirmed by such united testimony from the great hosts of Christian scholars who have put these words to the proof, and found them

true. Their voices are as many waters — among which I hear the voice of one of your own number, so recently added to the great company ; and it is that he that followeth Christ shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

May each one of you hear this voice as the Great Master utters it once more in your hearing, as he would make it cast its bright beam of promise over the whole of your future career ! And when your earthly life is gathered into one retrospect, as you now review your life in college, may you be so happy as to find that this promise has been fulfilled ! These are my last and best wishes for you, as I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## XL

### *THE NEW AND THE OLD COMMANDMENT.\**

"I WRITE NO NEW COMMANDMENT UNTO YOU, BUT AN OLD COMMANDMENT WHICH YE HAD FROM THE BEGINNING. THE OLD COMMANDMENT IS THE WORD WHICH YE HAVE HEARD FROM THE BEGINNING. AGAIN, A NEW COMMANDMENT I WRITE UNTO YOU, WHICH THING IS TRUE IN HIM AND IN YOU: BECAUSE THE DARKNESS IS PAST, AND THE TRUE LIGHT NOW SHINETH."—*1 John ii. 7, 8.*

THE writer of these words had witnessed the two greatest marvels of human history. He had been conversant with the person of him who, by the confession of all men, is conceded and acknowledged to have been the most wonderful man who ever lived on the earth. He had also observed the transforming effect upon human character which was produced by associating with him while he was alive, and by believing on him after he was dead. The student or critic may explain the fact as he chooses, but he cannot deny that Christ, living and dying, has wrought the most important changes in the character of millions on millions of the human race, — changes in kind such as no other being has ever wrought, and in energy such as can be compared to no other. It was this moral miracle which astonished the pagan world, calling their attention to the new faith as it ran like a flame from one heart to another. It was as though a new race of men had suddenly sprung out of the earth, or rather had been let down from heaven — their desires, their affections, their

\* *June 22, 1879.*

tastes, their words, and their doings, were so novel and strange. With these new men came new principles. A novel set of rules began to be taught and received. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, love not the world, set your affections on things above, for me to live is Christ: these, and the countless other common-places that everybody is tired of hearing, were once as novel as the discovery of galvanism, or as the first telegram that flashed over the land, or beneath the sea. It was light contrasted with darkness. A new sun shone out. Men knew that the darkness was past, and the true light had begun to shine. True, this light did not at once drink up, or chase away, the darkness. It awakened an active antagonism of both passion and opinion. The old impulses struggled against the new with tenacious and bitter hostility. The old doctrines and rules of life were stoutly defended against the Christian maxims. Passion and pride resisted with fierce sallies and tough endurance. This conflict between the old and the new has continued till now. At times it has seemed to be doubtful, and it is by no means over. But the new life and the new rules of life have steadily gained upon the old. Christendom is far enough from being thoroughly Christlike or Christian in its living and thinking; but there was never a time when the aims and the tastes, the loves and the hates, the principles and the maxims of the human race were more Christianized than they are at the present moment. Christian thought and Christian feeling, Christian motives and Christian self-sacrifice, Christian purity and refinement, Christian manners and tastes, Christian philosophy, jurisprudence, and literature, were never more distinctly recognized and fervently loved than at this moment. Strange as it may seem, at the very time when the ethical argument for Christianity was never so strong,



Christianity has at this time been subjected to a prolonged series of attacks from its ethical side. These attacks have come indeed from speculative rather than from practical men, from philosophers and critics rather than from men who live among their fellows, and know their needs and weaknesses from actual trial. But these speculative attacks are none the less dangerous because they come from the closets of abstract thinkers. In ethics and politics the theories of one generation have not infrequently, if not invariably, become the working-forces of the generation that followed. On the heights of speculative thought the solitary thinker has often discovered from afar a little cloud rising above the horizon which has suddenly darkened the heavens, and either blessed the earth with refreshing showers, or cursed it with a desolating tempest.

Let me describe briefly the objections to which I refer. They proceed from opposite directions, — one asserting that Christianity, so far as it is peculiar, is not old enough to be from God; the other that it is not new enough to satisfy the last developments of scientific thought. These positions are taken by the two anti-Christian schools which are known respectively as transcendental on the one side, and scientific on the other. The first is represented by Spinoza, Kant, Theodore Parker, and Francis Newman, and a host of literary men; the second by the extreme evolutionists, whether physical or spiritual, who hold that man's moral constitution is a product of blind forces, and that moral law is but the reflex and effect of social forces and institutions. The one contends that Christianity is simply love to God, and love to man; that it is this, and nothing more; and, as such, is as old as the creation, and incapable of being the subject of a new communication or any personal motives. Whether the Supreme is, or is

not, a person, revelation and miracle are both impossible. Christ is but an ideal transfigured by some wonderful ethical catastrophe into the symbol or impersonation of the law of duty and the inspiration of love. It is of no consequence whether the living and loving God, whose help in being good, men were wont to rely on, is, or is not, beyond the sky, or whether Christ, who brought God so near, is ready to pity and help. It is enough that we love goodness and duty for their own sake. To love them because God will smile, and Christ will save, is mercenary and mean. The law of duty is an old commandment which men have had from the beginning. If it is worthy of man or of God, it cannot be improved, nor can it be made stronger by any punishment or reward. We therefore take the kernel of Christianity, and cast away the shell. We accept its import so far as it proclaims the old commandment of ethical truth, and reject its story, and the miraculous and living Christ whom the story reveals.

The school of evolution teaches that the Christian ethics are worthless, because they are antiquated, and incapable of meeting the exigencies of modern life. They consist of a few rude practical precepts which have no scientific value. They served their time well enough in a practical way when society was simple, and man's experience was limited; but they have neither permanence nor value for the truly scientific mind, except as an instructive remnant of the past. The peculiar Christian virtues are overstrained and delusive sentimentalities. As for the supernatural origination of the system, this is of necessity rejected on the theory of the development of every thing by natural law. The moral nature of man is itself the product of social environment. The more advanced brutes have more than a rudimentary conscience. The responsible will in man

or brute is only a fiction of disappointed desire, or aspiring pride, or sensitive emulation; the condemning conscience nothing but the fancied presence of our fellow-men sitting in an imagined court of judgment and award. Personality is but the gathered recollections of our past experiences, or the assembled hopes of possible future good. Character is the inheritance of the accumulated tendencies for good or evil of our ancestors so far as they have been inwrought into the brain-fibres, added to the smaller stock of the impulses which have been evoked from our own circumstances, and have been embedded effectually in the few brain-cells which we have grown for ourselves. Right and wrong, holiness and sin, are but the conformity or nonconformity of our acts, or it may be our impulses, to the prevailing opinions of the majority — or of a minority even, if it has force and skill enough to prevail. The rights of men are variable quantities which change with the social conditions of the community. The indignant protest against wrong, the appeal to a just God who will right the sufferings of the oppressed, are sentimentalities which science cannot justify. The irrepressible conviction that there is another life, coupled with the belief in the moral order of the universe, are a complicated tangle of exaggerated emotions which are rejected by the stern teachings of scientific truth. There is no future life. All the analogies of nature and the teachings of development require us to be satisfied with the merging of our personal being into higher potencies of thought and feeling in the mind of succeeding generations. I am well aware that not a few who hold this theory of ethical phenomena insist that this is only an explanation of their scientific relations, and in no sense inconsistent with the practical control of the most fervid and most elevated emotions and principles. This is

doubtless true. Some of the best and purest of men have accepted the most destructive and dangerous theories. It is equally true, on the other hand, that the logic of any false theory of life and society is certain to be applied sooner or later to its legitimate conclusions by the great mass of those who accept it. It would seem that such a theory as I have described, which resolves duty and conscience and retribution and God and immortality into these chance growths of social environment, must rob them of their power to elevate and restrain, with any man whose heart and mind are not controlled by the tenacious remnants of a better ethical creed. For men of one idea and limited experience, a theory like this might become a maddening creed that would incite to any sensual indulgence, or justify any crime.

Christianity is in our times subjected to the double strain that its peculiar claims are disproved by the charge that as a moral force it is either not old enough or not new enough to warrant the confidence of men. Against both these views I would urge that it has with it all the wealth and prestige of the past, and all the promise of the future. It is at once an old and a new commandment, and can never be dispensed with as an agency for man's moral progress. In support of this view I would observe, —

1. The Christian ethics are as old and as permanent as the very nature of man. They recognize man as imposing upon himself the law of duty by the very necessity of his being. He does this as naturally as he eats, sleeps, or breathes. The human powers may indeed be neglected and misused; but so soon as a man calls them into action, he becomes a law unto himself. The import of this law is also clear and uniform so far as any man honestly applies it. Christianity does not

teach that every man expresses this law in language, or draws it out in detail, any more than it assumes or declares that he assents to the simple axioms of geometry, but it teaches and implies that the moral law is as old and self-evident and as sacred as man himself. In one sense, indeed, it is taught by parents and teachers; but the teacher instructs the pupil by telling him what he will find written on his own heart. He simply bids him look within, and asserts what he will find if he looks patiently and carefully. The doctrine of Christianity upon these points is summed up in the words, "He hath showed thee, O man! what is good." "These having not the law, are a law unto themselves." This law not only respects the desires and purposes of men, but extends to their actions. It finds certain relations holding men together in the family, in the state, by friendship and gratitude, by promises or contracts. These impose duties and limits which all men acknowledge to be sacred and binding. Wherever we find duty written of, we find these duties uniformly recognized as sacred. Whether it is by Socrates or Buddha, Confucius or Moses, Solomon or Isaiah, or by the newest moralist of modern times, we find the same special duties uniformly enforced as binding. The code of Christianity differs from all the oldest codes, only in concerning itself with the inmost desires and purposes, and in directing every word and action. Every system of ethics, however defective or perverse, moves in the same direction with the Christian. The primal duties shine aloft like stars; and even when lust has been excused, and passion stimulated, and crime sanctioned, by a corrupt code, it has always been under the sacred name of country, or friend, or benefactor, or confederate, that sin and crime have been permitted or commanded in the name of duty.

It should not be forgotten that Christianity, like all

the older moralities, enforces duty by religion, not only recognizing certain duties owing to the Deity, but acknowledging God as a moral ruler and judge. While it finds the measure of duty in the nature of man, and enforces it by the conscience of men, it recognizes God as the enforcer of moral law. The idea that God is not a personal being, and holds no personal relations with man, is peculiar to modern times. It is a novelty unknown of old. The Christian ethics never dreams that for God to reward the good, or punish the wicked, is to detract from the purity or energy of either holiness or sin. No more do any of the ancient systems. They are all positively, intensely, and earnestly religious; and Christianity is like them in this. I need not say at present in what respects it is unlike them. It is no dishonor to the Christian ethics, to find in it a close relationship between them and the systems and rules of duty which have formed the manners and morals of the great nations of the past, and which are at this moment moulding the character of millions of our race to whatever of virtue and culture they attain. All these systems are founded on our common nature as men. They recognize common relations between man and man, and man and God. They propose to train man to self-control, to active service and sacrifice for his fellow-men, to obedience to the known or unknown deity in whom we live, and into whose presence death will bring us. The common testimony of the best of all the old systems is expressed in the words, "He hath showed thee, O man! what is good; and what does the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?" "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteously, is accepted with him."

2. Christianity, though an old, was also a new, com-

mandment. It was new in its conceptions of ideal human excellence. The old morality, Judaism included, never attained such an exemplification of what human nature could become as Christ furnished by living a perfect human life. The old law said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." But what it was to be holy, no living man had ever known for himself, or shown to others. Christ said, "Be ye perfect, for your Father in heaven is perfect." The precept was good, but it was abstract. The world had never seen a holy or a perfect man, and did not dream of the possibilities of human nature when at its best. It needed a concrete exemplar; and, as one new precept after another dropped like honey from Christ's lips, his very look and tone gave effect to the utterance. The living illustration of his words by his life gave wondrous power to his speech.

Such an illustration was especially needed, and especially powerful in bringing out the attractions of the characteristically Christian virtues. We read the serene and humane meditations of Marcus Aurelius, and as we ponder on the sweet but sad thoughts of this imperial sympathizer with his kind,—this ruler of the world, who was depressed because he was not more completely master over himself,—we are struck with the impotence of his more than half Christian spirit to attract the world by its beauty. Hundreds and thousands of such saints may have lived in the darkness of heathenism, whose lives have failed to lend subduing force to their words. Christ illustrated his own precepts in detail; and his winning example gave a charm to every one of those virtues which had otherwise been endured with supercilious contempt, or rejected with angry scorn. His words are sweet to our ear; but had not Christ lived them out in his own life, even *his* own words, manifoldly more sweet and touching than the words of the

emperor, would never have attained their deserved honor.

The Christian ethics are pre-eminently new in being taught by principles, while their application was left to varying circumstances. All moral teachers before Christ had been precise and uncompromising in proportion to their earnestness. Christ bade his disciples cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, rather than sin with either, but he warned as earnestly against severe and censorious judgments in respect to particular actions. These few precepts of his have furnished materials for volumes of what is called scientific morality; or, rather, if they had been understood, they would have prevented many such volumes from encumbering the libraries, and vexing the consciences, of the past. The observance of them would have saved Christendom the protracted curses of the religious wars with which it has dishonored its Master, and the persecutions with which his professed followers have disgraced his faith, and the belittling controversies that have vexed and wasted its life. The fact that the world has been so slow to understand the result of these principles, is the most satisfying testimony of their originality. The variety and reach of Christ's precepts, especially when enforced by his rounded and peculiar life, also stamp his teachings as new. We have heard much of late of single sayings of wise rabbis, which sound singularly like detached utterances of our Lord; and the inference has been rashly drawn, that his own teachings were nothing new for those times. We forget, that, had not Christ availed himself of these utterances of the wise men of his nation, he would not have taught as a man, and overlook altogether the special use he made of the thoughts which he quoted from others, as also the wealth of the many original sayings which fell from his



lips, and, above all, the force which these sayings gained from his life.

It still remains to be said, what is very hard for some in these days to appreciate or believe, and hardest for some to receive, that the new and strange power of Christianity, as an ethical system, was derived from the person of its author. It was Christ himself who gave their peculiar and unexhausted energy to his teachings and his life. Two things the world had waited for, — a knowledge of duty, and a willingness to perform it; or, in other words, a true and solid theory of ethics, and a strong impulse to translate it into action. Before the time of Christ, whatever impulse had been felt had come from religion. No student of history doubts that this has always been the most potent factor in the ethical life, whether for good or for evil. No one who traces the first beginning of Christianity, can doubt that the new moral life which vivified the world proceeded directly from the risen Christ, who, from that moment, claimed and received the best homage which the world could give. The precepts which Christ uttered in his lifetime, winning as they were, had fallen powerless from his lips, even when enforced by the charm and dignity of his personal presence; but when the precepts which Christ had taught, and the inspiration which he had lived, were glorified by the radiance which streamed from his throne, his words became the world's law, and his example inspired the world's life. Then, and only then, could it be said, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." It was the ascended Christ who had honored the life of self-sacrifice and meekness, and self-control and faith, and honor and purity and self-distrust, — who had gone to an agonizing death for the world's welfare, full of pity for its perverseness, breathing out a prayer with the last gasp of life for its

forgiveness, returning again to life that he might reassure his bewildered followers that he was the same to them here and there, in the spiritual as in the earthly sphere, and a second time making himself manifest by spiritual influences, that made heroes of every man of them. It was this majestic being who forever afterwards testified of himself, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore." It was this living person that henceforth began to remodel the world's philosophy of duty, and to breathe a resistless energy into its renewed ethical life. The Sermon on the Mount, with its many new and strange sayings, astonished and moved those who heard its utterances. The teacher taught as one having authority indeed. But the words came and went, only arresting here and there a listener. But when the same teachings sounded from the clouds that gathered about the ascending Son of God, they were ever afterwards echoed and re-echoed in all the schools that sought after true wisdom. These reverberations of answering assent were never so hearty and so manifold as now. The response of the whole world, whether unbelieving or believing, is, "These words are true and beautiful. Whoever thou art, O mysterious One! to whom shall we go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life."

All candid men will own that this faith in Christ's personal authority gave energy to Christ's teachings and example. No man thinks of denying that this, and this alone, explains the wonderful change in the world's thinking in respect to the ideas and rules of duty which began in the first century. All will admit that it has been sustained and revived by this faith till now, and that for the present the majority of men are as greatly in need of it as ever.

And yet many propose to dispense with it for them-

selves and for others, because, forsooth, a man who is enlightened to see the attractions, and feel the force, of duty, is quite able to dispense with personal considerations. He is, or ought to be, above all sentimentality. Moreover, the enforcement of duty by any personal motives, the appeal to hope or fear, the promise and the threat, introduce a degrading and immoral alloy into the motives of men, which, though necessary for a season, cannot be accepted as a permanent element in the ethics of Christ when understood in their newest import.

All this is urged against the admitted fact standing out in the boldest relief, that till now the world's morality has derived its strongest impulses from Christ as sent from God, and that the person of Christ, either as a reality or a symbol, was never held in such honor as now. In theory it is equally weak when a man be-thinks himself that personality in man and God is the highest and noblest form of existence and activity, and that moral relations, if they mean any thing, are emphatically personal. If they concern man's duties to himself, commanding and forbidding—rewarding and punishing himself, in the solemn court which conscience sets up in every man's being; or if they concern man's duties to his fellows,—they introduce a wider range of similar experiences. It is true the final appeal is to the court in a man's own breast whenever a conflict arises through human infirmity and passion. But even then the individual conscience must assume that the unbiased and final judgment of his fellow-men and of God coincides with his own. But for dependent man to exclude God from the workings of his moral nature on the ground that he has no favors to ask, no help to receive, no sympathy to accept, no guidance to welcome, no communion to maintain with him who gave him

existence, and renews the springs of life ; or for a man to accept God in his intellectual theory of duty, and to reject Christ as the quickener of his moral life, in face of the testimony of this eighteenth century of the world's experience of what faith in Christ has done for it, and on the ground that he prefers, or finds it easy, to be a good man without any extraneous aids, — is, to say the least, a position that has no scientific justification. The facts of man's nature are as we find them. We did not create them. Our scientific theory of nature and of life cannot alter them. Our fond ideals and ideal wishes will not set them aside. We are fearfully imperfect. We need forgiveness and help and comfort. We cannot find these in ourselves or in our fellow-men, nor in any more favorable conditions of life. No new social adjustments can man make better, however convenient and beneficial they may be to a certain degree. We need God, the living God, as a personal force. Has he come to us in Christ? What has he not done for the world? What is he not to do for it? If this new force is to be withdrawn, and the Christ who was once living is to be proved never to have lived — if the risen Christ, to whom the world has looked up in worship until it has so far been lifted out of its passion and its pride, is no longer to inspire its moral life, then it must sink back to the slow and desperate processes of self-redemption, and the old story must continue to be repeated of fruitless struggles ending in despair.

8. The Christian ethics since the beginning have been developed in new forms of truth, and new manifestations of power. The triumph of truth of every kind, especially of ethical truth, is to be measured by the number of men who receive it, the strength of conviction with which they hold it, and the energy of love with which they are ready to sacrifice and die for it. When Christ

left the earth, although the love to his person was strong, the range of conviction concerning Christian duty was narrow. If we leave out of view the supernatural inspiration which followed, and look at the believing Church, when it was left to itself, and compare Christendom as it was with what Christendom has become as to its intelligent apprehension of Christian truth and the application of it to the Christian life, how marvellous has been its progress, how constant the renewal of its life, and how varied and countless its widening, deepening knowledge of what Christianity can make of man, and requires every man to become! The oldest morality, so far as it recognized the nature of man as in some sense enforcing duty, implied the dignity of the individual. But how imperfectly and inconsistently was this held by the best of these older systems! Every one of them limited these recognitions to the boundaries of the state, and never dreamed that common manhood imposed common duties, and justified the assertion of common rights. Even after Christ had enforced this truth by his life and death, how slow were Christian philosophers and jurists to accept it in the broad significance of its truth, and the wide reach of its applications! Slowly but surely the Church went on, often stupidly ignorant of the foundation principles of its moral life, and ferociously resisting their application; and yet as one hard question of duty after another has been thrown into the furnace of discussion, the inward force of Christian love and the potent solvent of Christian logic have finally reduced the toughest prejudices, till in an instant the flowing metal has taken the shape of a new truth, with a new and permanent life. We do not say that Christian men, and indeed the whole Christian Church, have not at times resisted heartily and successfully many legitimate, simple, and obvious appli-

cations of the first principles of Christian duty, but we do assert that it has uniformly yielded to manifested truth, and in this way has been constantly renewing and deepening its ethical convictions. That it should have been allowed to err, and bitterly suffer for it; that it should have fought the truth which it afterward confessed and defended, — is an incident of its human limitations. But that it should constantly renew the clearness of its insight, and the fervor of its conviction, was distinctly foretold by its author, and has been fulfilled in the history of Christendom.

Again, the force of Christ's personal life has also renewed its energy. We have adverted to what this influence must have been during the first generation upon those who loved Christ with human tenderness, and whose eyes followed him with amazed worship as he was taken up from their sight. The energy of their life gave to the love of these disciples the impulse which was needed to root it in the heart of humanity. Since then it has followed the laws of earthly conflict, and been subject to varied human vicissitudes. The inspirer of the best human affections has not come again in person, though many in fancy and in hope have waited to see him. But all this while he has been present in the earth, through the lives of saintly men and women, in whose bright example men have seemed to catch a glowing reflection of his personal presence, and whose every wish and aim have been a renewal of the Master's presence and image. It was the Master himself who said, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so I send them into the world." It is but the sober truth to say, that through every living Christian disciple, and through the united community of Christlike souls, during the progress of the Christian centuries, there has been constantly flowing the active and irrepressible energy of

Christ's personal life. In every household, however humble, where there has been a loving Christian mother, or a patient Christian child; in every hamlet, however profane and godless, where there has been a single loyal servant of the Master; in every high place of power or wealth or learning, to which Christ has given added lustre and dignity; in every low and dark place, where Christian virtues have sparkled like diamonds, — there has been the energy of the living Christ. In view of the self-sacrifice of the Master, it has been the strength of the disciple to say, "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." In view of the peculiar dignity of his calling to represent his Master, it has been his glory to say, "It is enough that the disciple should be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord."

If, in this view of the matter, we ask whether the person of Christ, as responded to in the convictions of men and reflected in their lives, has been renewing its power, we have this answer to give: It is but the sober truth to say that there never was a time, when, in the most solid of these convictions, the person of Christ was held in such devoted esteem, or his name invested with more fragrant associations, or his example followed with a more faithful conscientiousness, or enforced by the bright and varied attractions of so many humble and loving followers. We deplore, and with reason, the decay of faith in respect to many points of greater and minor importance. The minds of men, especially of thinking and reading men, are, indeed, unsettled in regard to the most vital truths, such as the personality of God, and the reality of his manifestation in Christ. In the struggles between darkness and light, the gathering cloud often rolls up for an instant in threatening form, and seems for a moment to shut out forever the

sun of the universe, even from the telescopic eye of science. Wave after wave of cloud moves against the sacred form of the world's Redeemer and Lord. For an instant, it may seem to some that he has vanished forever. But we look again, and lo! from out of these passing clouds his form again emerges, steadfast, serene, more bright and beautiful than ever from the background of darkness; and it is greeted with a new shout of welcome, which reveals the devoted strength of the faith of men in God and Christ, and the inextinguishable ardor of their loyalty and love.

4. Christianity, both as a law and force, has the capacity and promise of a progressive renewal in the future. It has the capacity for constant development and progress. It can never be outgrown, because its principles are capable of being applied to every exigency of human speculation and action. It can never be dispensed with, because man can never be independent of God, the living God; and in the fierce trials which are yet before him, he may find greater need than ever of God as revealed in Christ. That such trials are to come, we do not doubt. We cannot predict what new strains are to be brought upon our individual or social life. There are signs that the bonds of faith and reverence, of order and decency, of kindliness and affection, which have so long held men together, are to be weakened, perhaps withered, by the dry-rot of confident and conceited speculation, or consumed by the fire of human passion. It is not impossible that society may be convulsed by the heaving earthquake from beneath, or the whirling tornado from the air. We cannot tell to what new forms of questioning the received truths of faith may be subjected, or how far speculation and history and criticism may lead to new interpretations of nature and Christ and human duty. But this much we do



know, — that every change through which Christianity has been conducted in the past, has served to bring out in bolder relief and brighter radiance the great verities that from the first have been esteemed as the essentials of Christian truth and duty. Old formulas of doctrine have indeed been more or less modified, or have received new interpretations. History and criticism have thrown a glare of new light upon the Scriptures, which has been sometimes so bright as to expose strange and unexpected shadows. Science has penetrated the constitution of nature, and unrolled the mysterious pages of its history, and started many as yet unanswered questions in respect to the mutual relations of matter and spirit, of nature and of God. But man remains the same in his nature, his needs, and his duties, in his weakness and strength, in his hopes and his fears, and therefore the old religion stands.

The old commandment has been continually renewing its life by new developments and new interpretations, by new illustrations and new applications, and yet it is the same old commandment still. The newest science, the newest criticism, the newest forms of practical ethics, the newest political wisdom, in one way or other re-affirm the law originally written on the human heart, the law re-affirmed by Moses, the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. We believe that in the future, whether our progress is to be in sunshine or in storm, whether it is to be by discussion in the closet and the forum, or by strife on the battle-field of civil or social war, whether the new lessons are to be gently distilled as the dew, or revealed by lightning and tempest, men are continually to renew their convictions in the great truths which God upholds by his power, and Christ was revealed to enforce, — the personal responsibility and freedom of man, the sacredness of human

duty, the nearness of man to God, the certainty and awfulness, the reasonableness and equity, of future retribution, the excellence of the life that Christ has exemplified, and the assured triumphs of the kingdom of light.

But we also believe, that as men shall be more and more assured of these common truths, and be more concerned with their application to the lives of their fellow-men ; as they are more entranced with a deepening and glowing love for the living and the loving Christ ; as they become more generous, tolerant, and loving, — they will enlarge their knowledge of the manifold applications of Christian truth and duty. While these, the old foundations, will remain unchanged, new structures of beauty and of state will rise, such as the world has never dreamed of, in the philosophy, the literature, the art, the manners, the politics, the trade, which Christianity shall transfigure by its enlightened and loving spirit, and employ in nobler uses, and electrify with resistless energy.

We believe also, that the new examples of Christian character which shall be formed under these favoring influences will renew and intensify the image of the Master. The gathered strength of public opinion shall unite communities of men in representing at every turn the purifying and ennobling presence of Christ. Christianized households and schools and villages and cities shall use science and art and letters and civilization as ready servitors and constant witnesses for the living Christ. The tabernacle of God shall be with men ; and he will dwell with them when the last commandment has been reached, and man and human society have completed the development which the plan of God has provided, and the redeeming love of Christ shall surely accomplish.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,*— These truths are not unfamiliar to your thoughts. The questions which I have endeavored to answer, spring into the minds of all thinking men at the present time. They force themselves upon the attention of all who are conversant with the course of speculation now abroad in the world. Development and progress are the watchwords of the hour. In science and letters, in every field of research and of culture, the demand is for something new, and the supply as constantly meets the demand. So many new and startling speculations have of late been accepted, and so many old and venerable theories displaced in the most solid minds, while history and criticism have as frequently defended such surprising conclusions, that it is not unnatural that the student who is introduced suddenly to this imposing array of novel speculations, and confronted with the confident asseverations of brilliant theorists, should ask in earnest and sad misgiving, Is every thing old to go which men have trusted? Must theism be abandoned because it is antiquated, and Christ be denied because the time-spirit can no longer find occasion for him? Is human personality dissolved by the last analysis? Has the conscience which makes cowards of us all been itself frightened away at the last word of the comparative physiologist? Is morality only a sentiment, and this the changing product of habit and environment? Are worship and prayer and natural piety to dry up or die out of the soul under the keen and searching eyes of science and criticism? On the other hand, if we believe, must we accept a formulated tradition, or a stiff and scholastic dogma, or an unnatural morality? Did the living God speak from Sinai thousands of years ago, and has nothing new been commanded, or can nothing new be inferred as to his will? Did Christ exhaust the limits of the code

of practical morality in the exact words which he uttered, leaving nothing to be inferred in respect to special duties in the broad light of the rich and manifold experiences of modern life, and the complicated structures of modern society?

To these and all questions like them, I have endeavored on this occasion to furnish a comprehensive answer. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. This is as pertinent to living truths as to living souls. Christ declares of himself, "I make all things new. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

Go forth into life, carrying with you the firm conviction that faith in God and duty, in Christ and his cause, is not only justified, but required by the most liberal and the profoundest philosophy. Suspect of haste and charlatanism all those conclusions which are at war with the old humanities and the venerable faiths on which Christendom has stood so solidly for centuries, and through which men have prayed and worshipped and done heroic service for these several generations. Be assured also that these faiths are not dead traditions, but living germs which are capable of growth and expansion, and of varied adaptation to every demand of human experience.

Remember above all, as the one condition of safety, that faith is fidelity to a living person, and that Christian faith is fidelity to Christ. Stand strongly in fervent and hearty loyalty to him, and you may safely leave manifold questions to settle themselves. Do not be mere lookers-on in this day of hesitating and over-curious unbelief. No mere spectators are allowed: no sneering doubters, no captious critics, no self-conceited dogmatists of unbelief, have any place in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Strong and hearty conviction can only

come of earnest feeling and practical self-consecration. Whatever you believe, translate most vigorously into your life. Be ambitious of one thing, — that you may be permitted to show some special and effective manifestation of the Master in the individual life which you may live. In this way you cannot fail of a successful life. Your convictions will become fixed, because they are enlightened: they will be rooted in your own being, because they will have grown with your life. They will be simple yet strong, tolerant yet unshaken, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Seek for a faith like this, and you shall certainly find it. Fight the good fight of faith, and you shall surely lay hold of eternal life.

These are my best wishes and my parting blessing as I bid you farewell.

## XII.

### *AGNOSTICISM A DOCTRINE OF DESPAIR.\**

"HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD." — *Eph. ii. 12.*

THIS descriptive phrase, when condensed to its utmost, might be read thus: *Hopeless* because *Godless*. Each of these epithets is sufficiently significant when taken alone. When coupled together, their force is more than doubled. To be godless is to fail to acknowledge him whom men naturally own. It is to refuse to worship the Creator and Father in heaven, whom all the right-minded and loyal-hearted instinctively reverence. It is to forsake God, and therefore to be *God-forsaken*, as the homely phrase is; that is, to be a man whom the sunshine warms with no heat, and the rain blesses with no refreshment, because, in the wide world which God has made, he finds no living and loving God. No wonder that such a man has no hope, — that he is classed with those to whom "hope never comes, that comes to all."

The condition of the persons here referred to was simply negative. They are described as without God, and without hope. Possibly they did not deny, or disbelieve in, God. They might have been so occupied with the world itself in its brightness and beauty, that God was absent from all their thinking. Possibly, one

\* June 27, 1880.

or another might have had daring enough to say, there is no God. Perhaps, though not probably, in those times, some of them held that God could not be known, and invested this dogma with a religious halo, to which they responded with mystic wonder. But to them all, there was no God; and with them all there was no hope. So wrote our apostle, out of his fresh and vivid experience of the hope which had come to him from the new and vivid manifestation of God to himself, as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ,—a hope which thrilled every fibre of his being with electric life. Since his time, men in all generations have been transported with the same joyous hope. And just so often as God has been forgotten or denied, has hope left the hearts and habitations of men. But, in all these times, ignorance of God has been more commonly regarded as a calamity or a sin. In our days, as is well known, it comes to us in a new form. Ignorance of God is now taught as a necessity of reason. The unknowableness of God has been formulated into a Philosophy. It has even been defended as a Theology, and hallowed as a Religion. The sublimation of rational piety has been gravely set forth as that blind wonder which comes from man's conscious and necessary ignorance of God. In contrast with this new form of worship, the confident joyousness of the Christian faith has been called, "The impiety of the pious;" and the old saying has almost re-appeared in a new guise, that, even for a philosopher, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion."

I do not propose to argue concerning the truth or falsehood of these doctrines. I shall spend no time in discussing the logic or philosophy of the atheistic agnosticism which is somewhat currently taught and received at the present time. I shall simply treat of it in

its practical tendency: *as being destructive of hope in man, and therefore necessarily tending to the degradation of man's nature, and the lowering of his life.* I observe, —

1. That without God, there is no well-grounded hope for science. This may seem to be a very daring or a very paradoxical assertion. There is more truth in it, however, than appears at first sight. Inasmuch as it is in the name of science that ignorance of God is exalted into supreme wisdom, it may be worth while to inquire what the effect upon science would be, could it cast out God from all its thinking. I say, *could it do this*; for it would be very hard for it to succeed should it try ever so earnestly. Our newly fledged agnostics are apt to forget that all our modern science has been prosecuted in the broad and penetrating sunlight of faith in one living and personal God, — that not a single theory has been proposed, or experiment tried in nature, except with the distinct recognition of the truth, that a wise and loving mind at least *may* uphold and direct the goings-on of nature. The most passionate atheist cannot deny that this is the conviction of most of the living and breathing men about him. The most restrained agnostic cannot but know and feel that the theory which he strives to cherish is rejected by most of the women and children in Christendom, who look up into the sky, and walk upon the earth. The simple teachings of Christian theism are capable of being expanded into the grandest conceptions that science ever attempted to formulate, — conceptions so grand, that human reason is overwhelmed with their sublime relationships, and the human imagination is dazed to blindness when it would make them real. The first proposition of the Creed, which the infant pronounces with confiding simplicity, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," is easily expanded into those



conceptions that the man necessarily and intuitively accepts as the background upon which science traces all its formulæ and axioms, and by which it connects its theories, and proceeds to its conclusions.

That science must have both faith and hope, appears, whether we consider it as an *interpreter*, an *historian*, or a *prophet*. Science is first of all an *interpreter*. Though it begins with facts, it does not end with facts. Though it begins with the seen, it looks beneath the visible, and strives after the invisible. So soon as it compares and explains, it connects phenomena, and interprets events, by forces and laws, by hypotheses and theories. Let it test its theories by experiments a thousand times repeated, what it tests is something it has gained by interpretation; that is, something not seen, but believed. Following the unseen along the lines of interpreting thought, science is inevitably, even if reluctantly, led into the very presence of a thinking God.

Having gained some insight into the present by this process, science applies this insight in the form of *history*, going backwards into the remotest past, and unrolling its records, whether these are written on indestructible tables of stone, or suggested by the casual deposits of heaps of refuse. But history of every kind, even of nature, is interpreted force and law; and force, to be interpreted by law, must be orderly in its actings; and order in nature, if it does not require a directing God, is, to say the least, best explained by such a God. Especially if the great law of evolution or development is accepted, and so a long story of progress is traced in the past, there emerges and shapes itself into being a continuous plan, a comprehensive thought wide enough to embrace all the events which have successively germinated into being, and long enough to provide for their gradual succession. This requires a single mind as

wide as that of one forecasting God, and as unwearied as his understanding.

But science is also a *prophet*. It revels in its confidence in the future. Science believes that its interpretations of the present, and its solutions of the past, will be surpassed by the discoveries that are to be; that both nature and man shall continue as heretofore, obeying the same laws as from the beginning; that the revelations already made of both shall be lost sight of and forgotten in the revelations of force and law which the future shall disclose; and that, in all this progress, one of these revelations shall prepare the way for another, as naturally and as gently as the dawn brightens into the sunrise. Here is hope, ardent, confident, passionate hope, and, we may add, rational and well-grounded hope. On what does this hope rest, — this hope for the stability of nature's laws and the promise of the evolving future? We need not answer by any abstract analysis or refined philosophizing. We concede that it is not necessary for success or eminence in any special science that this fundamental question should be raised. We know that for eminence in any specialty, the natural faith and hope of men in science as interpretation and history and prophecy, is altogether sufficient, whether it is, or is not, expanded into actual faith in the living God. We do not object in the least that science stops short in its explanations of phenomena at molecules, and motion, and inertia, and attraction, and heat, and electricity, and heredity, and development, and variation, and environment. But we do contend that atheistic agnosticism gives no solution of those explanations that are fundamental to science which can be so satisfactory as is the creed of Christian theism. We also contend that the personal thinker is more than the scientist who interprets and prophecies, and that the living man demands

and accepts a personal God as the best solution of all the problems which every special science raises, but which no special science can solve.

Perhaps you have traversed a forest at midnight, and have painfully and slowly felt out your path among the objects which the darkness seemed to conceal rather than reveal. You have mastered it by slow but sure steps, such as the blind man feels out by exact and reasoning touch. Anon you traverse the same forest by noon. How luminous has it become by the aid of the all-pervading light. Possibly you do not think of the glorious sun from which this light proceeds, but you cannot but know that what was once an obscure thicket, beset with dimness and shade, is now flooded with the revealing light, and that hope and joy have taken the place of caution and doubt and fear. In like manner does the recognition of a personal intelligence who may be known by man, give an assured hope to what men call science. In this way has it been to its advancing hosts a pillar of fire by night, and a cloud by day. The denial of such an intelligence, or the assertion that he cannot be known, takes from science its hope, because it withdraws from the universe the illumination of personal reason and personal love which all scientific thinking accepts as possible and rational.

2. To be without God, is to be without hope in respect to man's moral culture and perfection. What we *are*, is of far greater consequence than what we *know*. Strength and perfection of character are the supreme aim of all right-judging men. When they think of what man was made to be, and of what they themselves might become, they cannot but aspire. But strong as conscience is to elevate, control, and command, a personal God is needed by man to give to his conscience energy and life. Personality without is required to re-

enforce the personality within. Conscience itself is but another name for the moral person within, when exalted to its most energetic self-assertion, and having to do with the individual self in its most characteristic manifestation, as it determines the character by its individual will. The theory that denies that God is a person, very naturally and logically denies that man is a person. It makes him only a highly developed set of phenomena flowering out from a hidden root—the unknowable unknown. What we call his personality, his will, his character, are all as unreal as the clouds of a summer noon—one moment apparently as fixed as mountain summits, and another dissolving as you gaze.

On any theory of man, a personal God is needed to give energy to the moral ideal, and to proclaim it as his personal will. The other self within us is often powerless to enforce obedience. Much as we may respect its commands when forced to hear them, we can, alas! too easily shut our ears to its voice. But when this better self represents the living God, who, though greater than conscience, speaks through conscience, then conscience takes the throne of the universe, and her voice is that of the eternal king to which all loyal subjects respond with rejoicing assent; and, with the exulting hope that the right will triumph, they rejoice that God reigns in righteousness.

But man is not always loyal, either to conscience or to God. As a sinner against both, he has need of deliverance and hope. What he most needs and longs for, is to be delivered from the narrowness of selfishness, the brutality of appetite, the fever of ambition, the meanness of envy, the fiendishness of hate, and the righteous displeasure of God against all these. When men know what they are, as measured by what they might have become, they cannot but be ashamed. When they

review their failures after trial, they cannot but despair. They find no rational ground in themselves for hope that they shall actually become better in the springs of feeling or the results of their life. If there is no God, or if they know of none who can show them what they ought to be, and who can and will help them, and whom it is rational to ask to guide and help them, they are without hope of lasting and triumphant success. But if God has made himself known in Christ, in order to give us a living example of human excellence, and also to inspire us to make this excellence our own, and, above all, in order to remove every hinderance or doubt in the way — then we may hope, by trusting ourselves to this redeeming God, at last to be like him. His life, his death, his words, his acts, his living self, are full of the inspiration of hope. That inspiration has wrought with mighty power through all the Christian generations. The more distinctly and lovingly Christ has made God to be known, the more confidently has man responded with hope that he shall be emancipated into likeness to God.

From all these hopes, the agnostic atheism cuts us off. It first weakens and shatters our Ideal of excellence; next it denies the Freedom by which we may rise; and finally it withdraws the inspiration which is ministered by our personal Deliverer and Friend. It weakens man's Ideal. It cannot do otherwise, for it derives the law of duty from the changing feelings of our fellow-men. It degrades the law of duty into a shifting product of society: it resolves conscience with its rewards and penalties into the outgrowth of the imagined favor or dislike of men as unstable as ourselves when this is fixed and transmitted by hereditary energy. Such an ideal, or law, or tribunal, can be neither sacred nor quickening nor binding, because it has no permanence. To be a

good or perfect man in one æon, is not the same thing as to be a good man in another. It is altogether a matter of taste or fashion, and each age under the law of development sets a new fashion for itself.

It also sets freedom aside. To reach any part of this ideal, is the result of simple mechanism. Character is the joint product of inheritance and circumstances. Freedom, with its splendid possibilities and its kindling power, is but a fancy and a shadow — the mocking phantom of man's romantic longings, or the vain surmising of his idle regrets.

There is neither inspiration nor hope for such a man in the help of God. He certainly needs help from some one greater than himself. If his moral ideals are not fixed, and he has no freedom with which to follow or reject such as he has, he is like a man who is bidden to walk in the sand that fails beneath his tread, and whose limbs are at the same time frozen with paralysis. Or he is like a bird with stiffened wings when dropped into an exhausted receiver. God cannot encourage or help him. To him there is no God, or none of whom he can know that he can or will give him aid.

He has no certain or fixed ideal to which to aspire. He has no freedom with which even to pray. He has no God to whom to pray. What better can such a man do than to give himself up to the passions and impulses of the moment, which at least may divert his thoughts from his degradation, or amuse his aimless and hopeless existence, or throw startling and lurid lights over the darkness of his despair?

3. Belief in God is the only condition of hope in the advancement of public and social morality, and consequently in social stability and progress. The universe in which we live represents two factors, — the physical and moral. Both of these are apparent in social phe-

nomena. If God is required as the ground of our hope in nature and in physical science, and also in the sphere of morals, how much more in that sphere in which nature and spirit meet together. Those who deny God, or who assert that we cannot know him, can give no reason for their faith and hope in human progress. Force and law alone, whether physical or moral, do not answer all our questions here. Social forces, too, are less easily discerned than those purely physical. Even if we could resolve these forces into material agencies, and assume that their laws can be expressed in mathematical formulæ, this would avail us but little, because the forces are so complex and subtle, less easily traced, less readily analyzed, and less confidently interpreted, and less readily turned into prophecy. But if we believe these forces to be largely spiritual and personal, and accept freedom in both man and God, then our only rational ground of hope for man's future is that the Eternal has his own plans concerning man's future well-being, and will fulfil them in a consummation of good.

The developments of the past, except as they reveal some plan of God, give no hope for the future. In the facts of the past, there is no security that the movement of man is onward. Manifold phenomena in human history suggest fearful forebodings of degeneracy, depravity, and retrogression. Long periods of darkness and eclipse have gathered in gloomy folds over the human race. Sudden collapses of faith have spread like the plague. Fearful convulsions have opened like the chasms of an earthquake to swallow up the gathered fruits of culture and art. But so soon as we know that God rules over man for man's moral discipline, and that Christ is setting up a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, then we lift up our hearts, and gather courage for man's future history.

We find good reason to conclude that man will continue to make progress in the knowledge of whatever is true, and just, and honest, and of good report. We become well assured that the simple law of Christian love will in due time be expanded by Christian science into thousands and tens of thousands of those special precepts of Christian ethics, which future generations shall joyfully accept, and that these will be light as air in their facile applications to the varying conditions of human existence, yet strong as links of iron to hold men to every form of duty. We triumph in the faith that the time will come when this unwritten law shall sound within every obedient soul as winningly and as lovingly as the evening breeze that rests on the wind-harp, and shall thunder as terribly in the ear of the disobedient as the voice of God from Sinai.

Such a faith in human progress is rational. It is true indeed, that if God is personal, and man is free, the relations of God to man may be more complicated, and less easily known, than if man is material, and God an unknowable and impersonal force. On the other hand, social science gains nothing, but loses much, in telling us that the laws of society are as fixed as the laws of the planets, and that man is as plastic to their moulding as star-dust or protoplasm are to the cosmic forces. For on either theory, if we are to have a science of the future, we must have faith in order and a purpose as the ground of our hope for that progress in which we confide. But order and purpose suppose a personal thinker. If we have no God, or a God whom we cannot know, we are without rational hope for that moral and social progress in which we all believe. We can only believe that men will make progress, because we desire it. The socialistic agnostic is a dogmatic sentimentalist rather than a rational philosopher.



4. Atheism, whether positive or negative, gives no hope for the conduct or comfort of man's individual life. Each man's personal life is ever present to himself as the object of his hopes or fears. Shall this life be long, or short? Shall it be bright, or dark? Shall it be a failure, or a success? The man who believes in God, and trusts in his guidance, he, and he alone, has solid ground for hope. He knows God as a force acting by law, and he knows him no less as a person acting in personal relations of influence and love. From both he gathers hope. He knows him through the forces of the universe which surround and confront him at every step, and he knows him as the heavenly Father who animates and directs these forces in every single joy or sorrow. In both relations he is in harmony with him, — with the first so far as he knows them, and with the God himself who controls both the known and the unknown to his true well-being, and makes even his ignorance and mistakes a blessing.

He knows and obeys God as revealed in nature. He believes most profoundly that he acts in the majestic forces of the universe and their unchanging laws. He recognizes the truth that both are everywhere present in the world of matter and of spirit. He watches these forces as they move, often seemingly like the summer cloud that broods lazily over the quiet earth at noon; sometimes like the cloud also in that it needs only to be touched by another as quiet as itself, and the thunderbolt and tornado will leap forth with destructive energy. But he does not limit his presence and his rule to physical agencies alone. He recognizes also his moral and spiritual forces and laws. Though the moral are less obtrusive, they are none the less sure: though slower in their working, they are none the less energetic. Their energy is even greater, resembling in this those subtler

agents of matter, which, though they glide into one another in secret hiding-places, and under Protean phases, are for that very reason the more easily gathered for a fearful retribution.

Within this vast enginery of force and law, man stands in his weakness and his strength. The spectacle of this enginery is sublime; and every day is making it more magnificent, for every day reveals something new in force or law, which manifests more of the thought and power of God. But, while man continually finds his strength in his power to interpret by scientific thought the forces and laws which had been before unknown, he is in the same proportion made more and more sensible of his weakness in his augmented apprehension of what is unrevealed. He is beset with fear lest he shall make some fatal mistake. Hence he asks earnestly, "Is there nothing more in this wide universe than force and law?" If there is nothing more, no man is so much to be pitied as he, — the man of scientific knowledge and scientific imagination, — for no man feels so lonely and helpless as he. He is alone! alone! as he muses upon the vastness of this great solitude, peopled though it be with the enormous agents that haunt and overmaster him with their presence, but are without a thought or care for his personal life. Could he but see behind these forces a personal being like himself, and capable of directing both force and law to issues of blessings to men, how welcome would that knowledge be to his lonely heart! That God he may see and find if he will. He is suggested by his own personality, which is his nobler, nay, his essential self. He is demanded by the weakness and limitations of his own nature. Why should not there be a personal and living God behind this machinery of force and law which we call nature? Why should I not know a living

spirit, as well as unknown force and definite law? and why should I not accept personality in God, as the best explanation of both? There is, there must be, such a Person: he fills this vast solitude by his immanent presence and his animating life. He directs the forces which I cannot control. While I dare not transgress any known manifestations of his will, either in force or law, I can trust myself to his personal care, even though I err from limited knowledge or foresight.

What natural theism thus suggests, Christian theism declares for man's guidance and comfort. The living God becomes our Father in heaven, the guardian of our life, our ever-present Friend, who understands our most secret thoughts, our weakest fears, our blushing shame, our conscious guilt, and who can bring to each and to all the sympathy and comfort and guidance of a personal friendship and an assured blessing. In what words of sublime condescension and moving pathos have these truths been declared! "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Ye are of more value than many sparrows. Take no thought for the morrow. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." These are the words of Him who spake as never man spake. Nor did he speak them alone. He lived them in his life, exemplifying them in look and demeanor, and showing their import by his loving trust. The same revelations of God were confirmed by his resurrection and his ascending majesty, as he went into the presence of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God. From that presence we hear the assuring words, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "Be careful for nothing; but in

every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." In this faith in God as the guide of their personal life, Christian believers, by myriads, have lived and died. In this hope, and in this alone, can the living of this generation stand.

5. The man without God is without hope for a future life. For such a man, at best, another life is simply possible. He has no rational assurance that it is certain. The universe is so vast, and man's dwelling is so contracted; its inhabitants are so manifold, and one among them is of so little moment; the distances are so enormous, and man's power to traverse them is so limited; the histories of the prehistoric ages are so gigantic in their forgotten details, and yet the title of each chapter is but an inscription over millions of the dead, — that men tremble before nature, as when a child looks upward on the face of an overhanging cliff, or peers over the edge of a yawning gulf.

Man shudders before Nature's remorseless insensibility. He notices how little she makes of the dead, and how little she cares for the living, — how she mocks at, and trifles with, sensibility and with life. An earthquake swallows up tens of thousands of living men. The jaws of the gulf that opened to receive them swing back to their place, and forthwith flowers adorn the ghastly seam, as if in mockery of the dead who are buried beneath. A great ship founders in the ocean, freighted with a thousand living souls. As they go down, they raise one shriek of anguish, that it would seem should rend the sky. But the cry is over, and the waters roll over the place as smoothly as though those thousand lives were not sleeping in death below. Of

another life, there are no tidings, and few suggestions, a possibility, or perhaps a probability, but no hope.

Nowadays, even this possibility is denied by many; and the probability against such a life is hardened into a certainty, and men strive to prove that they are not immortal, as men strive for a great prize. All the analogies of nature are interpreted to prove the extinction of man's being. Those who acknowledge no God but a mysterious force, those who deny to God personality and thought and affection and sympathy, most reasonably find no evidence in Nature for a future life; for when they look upon her stony and inflexible face, they find all the evidence to be against it.

Let such a man awake to the fact that God is, that he lives a personal life, that nature is not so much his hiding-place as it is a garment of the revealing light; that the forces of nature are his instruments, and the laws of nature his steadying and eternal thoughts; that man is made after God's image, and can interpret his thoughts, and commune with his living self; that life is man's school, every arrangement and lesson of which points to a definite end; that this end is not accomplished here, — then not only does there spring up in his heart the hope that this life shall be continued in another, but this hope becomes almost a certainty. But this hope is a certainty so long, and only so long, as this life is interpreted by the light of God's thought and God's personality. So long as this light continues to shine, every difficulty that would make against another life is turned into an argument in its favor, and every new doubt suggests the necessity of a new hope. Every roughness that has cast a shadow on the picture, reflects a gleam of light; and the hard, inexpressive face of Nature herself becomes radiant with promise and hope.

Now let God be seen to break forth from his hiding-

place, and to manifest himself in the Christ who conquers death and brings the immortal life to light through his rising and ascension; and the hope that had been reached as a conclusion of assured conviction is shouted forth in the song of triumph, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

I know that this argument, which sustains the hope of another life, is set aside by the agnostics with the denial that another life is of any value, or that men care for it. The next step is to argue that it is weak and ignoble to expect or desire it: the next is, to substitute for it an ideal existence in the lives of others by the continuance of our thoughts and activities in those fellow-men in whose lives we may expect to prolong our own. Let those accept this substitute for a future life who can, and find in it what satisfaction they may. They will certainly confess that this fancied contentment with personal annihilation, falls immeasurably short of what men call hope, and pre-eminently of the Christian hope, that is full of immortality.

The doctrine itself seems to us to be simply inhuman and unnatural, and to be refuted by the simplest practical test. If men do not care for a future life, how should they, and why do they, care for any future of the present life? If they do not dread annihilation, why do they not more frequently commit suicide? If the hope for a nobler future existence does not animate and inspire men as an original and inextinguishable impulse, how happens it that men cleave with such tenacity to the hope for a brief, and perhaps ignoble, hour in the present? Why is it so rare that even the most dis-

ciplined of modern philosophers is ready to exchange the briefest hour of personal being for this lauded immortality of thought or emotion in the person of another? It is not bravery, it is simple bravado, to deny or weaken the longing for a future life which every man confesses and feels. The labored apostrophes of George Eliot, and the studied declamations of John Morley, over the entrancing prospect of annihilation, are silenced by the pithy confessions of Shakspeare in Hamlet. The very earnestness of the denial is but a confession of the strength of the desire. I know that when a man half or wholly denies that God is, or that God is any thing to him, he must, to be consistent, deny, in the next breath, that there is a future life. I know that the temptation is very strong, that he should then seek to persuade himself that he cares nothing for that life; but he cannot succeed. He must have hope for this life, and he must have hope for the future. And he needs to know God, and to believe in God, if he would have hope for either.

This, then, is our conclusion: That so far as man denies God, or denies that God can be known, he abandons hope of every kind — that intellectual hope which is the life of scientific thought; hope for his own moral progress; hope for the progress of society; hope for guidance and comfort in his personal life, and hope for that future life for which the present is a preparation. As he lets these hopes go, one by one, his life loses its light and its dignity; morality loses its enthusiasm and its energy; science has no promise of success; sin gains a relentless hold; sorrow and darkness have no comfort; and life becomes a worthless farce or a sad tragedy, neither of which is worth the playing, because both end in nothing. Sooner or later this agnostic without hope will become morose and surly, or sensual and self-indul-

gent, or avaricious and churlish, or cold and selfish, or cultured and hollow, — in a word, a theoretical or a practical pessimist, as any man must who believes the world, as well as himself, to be without any worthy end for which one man or many men should care to live. Possibly, under special advantages of culture, he may be a modern Stoic, without the moral earnestness with which the ancient Stoic grimly confronted fate; or a modern Epicurean, without the unconscious gayety that Christianity has rendered forever impossible; or he will grope through the world, seeking the shadow of a religion that he knows can never give him rest, and a God whom he denies can ever be found. But, in either case, the story of his life will be summed up in the fearful epitaph, "*He lived without God, and died without hope.*"

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,* — This subject and the views which have been expressed, are not altogether novel or strange to your minds. We are not so narrow in this college as to be ignorant of the new theories that are just now spreading so rapidly abroad on the earth, and seem to be floating in the very air. We are not so illiberal as to be unwilling to try these theories by the test of reason. Though believers in a personal God, we should be ashamed not to give a patient hearing to every thing which the atheist or the agnostic can urge against our faith. Though ardent devotees of Christian theism, we should dishonor our faith and our Master did we not defend our faith and our Master against every argument which philosophy or science or letters can marshal, or even suggest, against either. Whatever others may say on this point, you know that the motto of this college, "*Lux et veritas,*" — i.e., *Light for the sake of the truth,* — is fervently and



zealously followed, and that light from any quarter is gratefully welcomed. The graduates who have gone out in the years before us, know the same, and there are many of them; and we can trust them all to speak in our defence, if need be, on this or any other question, with our enemies in the gate.

Agnosticism is a topic of present interest, especially with university and cultivated men, on both its speculative and its practical side. As a speculation, however, it is not new. It is as old as human thought. The doubts and misgivings from which it springs are older than the oldest fragment of human literature. The questions which it seeks to answer are as distinctly uttered in the Book of Job as are the replies of sneering despair, which are paraded in the last scientific periodical. Modern science and philosophy have not answered these questions. It may be doubted whether they have shed any light upon them. They have simply enlarged man's conceptions of the finite, and thus made it more easy for him to overlook or deny his power and his obligation to know the Infinite and the Self-existent. Culture and literature, to say the least, do not justify the modern contempt for positive faith. They simply widen our knowledge of human weakness and error, but most rashly conclude that every form of faith and worship is an attitude of blind wonder before the unknown, or a sentimental groping after what can never be found. These inferences are hasty and unwarranted, for the reason that modern culture and literature were never so enriched by the Christian faith, and never could find reasons so abundant for acknowledging Christ to be divine. And yet we must acknowledge, that, to the superficially educated and the hasty thinker, agnosticism offers many attractions, because it answers so many questions by a simple formula, and gathers or

disposes of many phenomena under plausible generalizations, and above all, because it releases the conscience and the life from present obligations of duty. Hence its theories run like wildfire among the multitudes, whose superficial or unfinished culture and training, or whose moral preferences, prepare them to receive it. With many persons these tendencies are comparatively harmless, at least for a time. The old traditions of duty and self-control, of decorum and worship, still remain, even though God and conscience are speculatively abandoned, and Christ is an unsolved enigma, and Christian hopes are harmless dreams, and the future life a questionable inheritance, and this life is a prize in a lottery, and the fervors and self-denials and self-conquests of the Christian life are innocent but vapid sentimentalities. With others, after a longer time, the God at first unknown, is openly denied, and Christ is rejected with passionate scorn; and the inspiration and restraints of Christian sentiment are contemptuously abandoned. By others the theory is applied still farther. Their motto is, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*. To one or another of these dangers, you are all exposed,—most of all to the danger that the energy of your faith may be weakened, and the fire of your zeal may be lowered, and the tone of your moral and spiritual life may be relaxed, by sympathy with this paralysis of faith, which is everywhere more or less prevalent.

Let me assure you that no calamity can befall a young man, which is so serious as the loss of that fire and hopefulness and courage for this life and the future, which are so congenial to the beginning of his active life. Hence no sign of our times is more depressing than that so many refined and thoughtful young men so readily accept the suggestions of doubt, and take a position of indifference or irresponsibility in respect to

the truths of Christian theism, and the personal obligations which they enforce. Against these tendencies would I warn you most earnestly, by the consideration that so fast and so far as God is unknown by any man, so fast and so far does hope depart from his soul,—hope for all that a man should care to live for; hope for scientific progress, for his own moral welfare, for the progress of the race, for a successful life, and for a happy immortality. Therefore do I declare to you in this sacred place, as you soberly look back upon your college life, and wistfully look forward to the unknown future, that if you would live a life of cheerful, joyful, and buoyant hopefulness, you must live a life that is controlled and hallowed and cheered by God's presence, and by a constant faith in his forgiving goodness. All else that a man should care for is secured you by this living hope in the living and ever-present God,—intellectual success and satisfaction as you grow in all knowledge and culture, sure progress in moral goodness, prosperity in your efforts for the well-being of man, the kind direction of your earthly life, and the assurance and anticipation of the life which is immortal. "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." These are the traditions of this place. Under these influences the generations have been trained which have gone before; each testifying that the truths and instructions, of which perhaps they had been more or less heedless while here, have come again to them with living power when recalled under the experiences of life. So may it ever be! so may it be with you! With these wishes and this blessing do I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## XIII.

### ***SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD.\****

**"BUT SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD." — *Matth. vi. 33.***

THE kingdom of God has been the subject of much ingenious research and learned discussion. The conception has been universally acknowledged to be original and ennobling. The confidence with which its Founder predicted its assured success and its final triumph has added to the mystery which invested its beginnings and has attended its progress. To every age it has presented itself in some new and peculiar phase, and yet with substantially the same demands. Every age has confronted these demands with a fresh scrutiny. Every challenge to its claims, and every arrest of its progress, has been followed by a new advance.

In the present generation it meets with the same old questions, "What is the kingdom of God? and what has it to do with the men of the present time?" While to these questions it returns answers which differ with the needs of each age, it never fails to enforce them with the demand of our text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

It follows, that what I propose to say of the nature of this kingdom will be implied in the reasons for seeking it first of all.

*\* June 26, 1881.*

1. The first of these reasons is that it proposes the noblest of all conceivable ends, a perfect human character. "The kingdom of God is within you." "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Though its instrumentalities are supernatural, the end of them all is the restoration of man to his better self. Though its appliances are from God, they are all directed to the redeemed and perfected manhood of individual men. Its conceptions of this manhood are definite and reasonable. It does not propose to except men from the limitations of a human body with its fatigues, its weaknesses, and its pains. It does not annihilate the affections and passions which make them men. It does not often raise them to an ecstatic mood, or the third heaven of mystic insight or rapt emotion. It plants us strongly and squarely with our human feet upon the vulgar earth, and it bids us look about us with cool and clear judgment, only never failing to discern the things that are excellent. We faint beneath the heat, we shiver with the cold, we pine for food, we love, we hate, we fear, we hope. But though we are moved by human infirmities, we are to master them by self-control; though provoked to anger, to envy, and to fear, we overcome such impulses by better thoughts; though elated by success, or depressed by failure, we accept our varied lot with patience and hope, and in all the disturbances of passion keep even the equipoise of our souls by the presence and the peace of the loving and living God. The secret springs of this perfected character, at once so human and yet so divine, are thankfulness and love, forgetfulness of self, and self-denying sympathy with others, the consecration of the active powers — nay, of the living self — to the well-being of our fellow-men, under the inspiration of faith. We do not inquire just now whence

it comes, but what it is. We greet this perfection and the aim for it with our welcome whenever we behold either. We gladly recognize this ideal as the same, by whom, or under whatever name, it is practised or taught; even when held by those who make little account of Christ or his Church — nay, who even turn their backs upon both, whether in sadness or in scorn. We care not much for its name; whether it is called by the scholastic name of altruism, or the words hallowed in human converse as the love that seeketh not her own — the mercy that is twice blessed, which blesseth him that gives, and him that takes. We care not whether this self-denying goodness is illustrated by the practical good sense of the parable of the good Samaritan, or half travestied in the moral quixotism of the “Light of Asia.” So far as the ideal is the same, so far we recognize its perfection, and acknowledge its authority. We only urge that whenever or wherever we discover this ideal of the kingdom of heaven, we confess it to be supreme. Its voice to every living man who beholds it as a fact, or imagines it as a fiction, is a voice of supreme command: “Seek me first. Here is the kingdom of God. Seek first of all that it be within you.”

Whether we wonder at this ideal in the matchless life of the Master, or hear of it in the blessed and loving words that fell from his lips; whether we find it more or less perfectly realized in the more or less perfect imitations by his disciples, or only catch a glimpse of it in our better aspirations; nay, even when we guess it through shame for our many failures, — we confess that this is the first and best thing to be sought for, wherever we are, and whatever else we attain.

It is this ideal, clothed as it is with this supreme authority, that gives value and dignity to the kingdom of God and whatever pertains to it. Every man who

seeks for this first and supremely is a member of this kingdom by divine right. He that seeks shall find. The temples of this kingdom, its priesthood, its rites, its spectacles, its festivals, its music, its traditions, its creeds, its theologies, are nothing except they propose this as their outcome and fruit. Its penances, its fastings, its vigils, its sacrifices, its vows, its adjurations, and its prayers, are as of little worth unless they enforce the ideal of this new man formed after the image of him who created him.

2. The kingdom of God enforces this ideal by an effective personal agency. So long as it commends to us a perfect ideal, it is a school of philosophy — charming and divine indeed, but still a philosophy. The kingdom of God is such a school as we have seen, but it is more. It is also a religion; for it is warmed with love to a divine person, and controlled by devotion to the highest and purest object of human loyalty and love. It is a life which is commanded by the God whom we worship as our Father in heaven, which is exemplified by the Christ by whom God commends to us his forgiving grace in life and death, and which is breathed into our souls by the divine Spirit.

Faith is the one condition of attaining this renewed manhood, because faith brings us into a loving connection with a personal God. Hence this kingdom is supernatural, for personal influences are in a higher plane than abstract precepts or impersonal ideals. This is no surprising thing. Human life at every turn abounds with examples of the superiority of personal force. Human excellence is propagated, not by rules or imaginings, but by being impersonated in those whom we love and admire. The child learns to love goodness by loving his good mother or father or teacher or playmate or friend. Happy is the youth or man, who, as

he goes on in life, is ever finding a charmed circle of friends, who are to him a constant inspiration. To such a one, goodness is all the while becoming incarnate, and thereby roots itself more and more deeply in his soul.

So it is in the kingdom of God. We lay hold on that perfection which is eternal life by believing in him who is Eternal Life — the mysterious Person who has created and sustains us, who heals and restores our souls — who was manifest to us, and we have seen his glory. As we believe in him, he becomes to us the power of God for our better life. We cannot believe in him without being like him. Hence, faith in the living and self-denying Christ is our first duty. Here is no arbitrary condition of salvation. We do not believe in order that we may be saved, but belief is itself salvation; because so far as we believe in Christ we must be like Christ, and the more earnestly we believe, the more will we love and admire him.

When, then, the kingdom of God comes to us in this personal form, it necessarily claims our first and supreme regard. It tells every man what he knows, or may know already, that its ideal is excellent, and he ought to seek it at once. And it also tells him that he can do this best and only as he hears the voice of the living and loving God, and accepts the testimony of the dying and risen Christ; and that for this reason he should seek first that kingdom in which goodness is made personal in God, and lives and loves and dies in Christ.

This view of faith is important for many reasons. First of all, it enables us to see that the kingdom of God, with all its diversities of creed and sects, is essentially one, and that it is made one by its faith in the personal Christ, who inspires men by his life, and saves men by his death. Interpretations of the Christian



history may be various according to the various capacities and knowledge of Christian students. Systems of abstract doctrine are largely the product of human speculation and reasoning in respect to the import of Christ's words and deeds. Parties must arise in this kingdom so long as men are narrow and selfish, even though they are awed and elevated by the presence of the great Master. But in all these interpretations and creeds and partisan heats, the same living Christ is manifested to man and received by man as the very power of God. Even the divisions and strifes of this kingdom testify that there is at its centre a personal force that draws all men to himself.

But what shall we say of those who seem to aspire after eternal life without the aid of a conscious faith? What of those who seem to catch the Christian enthusiasm of humanity, and to inspire to more than Christian self-sacrifice, who yet acknowledge no obligations to faith and a personal Christ, or who even deny any such obligations? What shall we say? Suppose we say nothing, mindful of the words of the Master, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Let it suffice us to say for ourselves, others may dispense with a personal Christ, we cannot. If others turn their backs upon his actual presence, they cannot avoid the light and warmth that glow in his kingdom. Even though they read his word only as a symbol, it may be to them the power of God. One memorable example comes to the mind of all — of the great writer so recently gone; whose youth was marked by devotion to Christian duties in the light of a fervent Christian faith, but who subsequently abandoned her belief in the Christian story, while yet she adhered with passionate fervor to the Christian ideal, and died with her "Thomas à Kempis" near to her heart. How much she gained, never to lose, from her

early faith, no one can measure; how much she lost in losing that faith, is indirectly confessed by the gloomy steadfastness with which she looked and longed for a future, yet long deferred, Christian kingdom of God. Her gain and her loss should warn and excite each one of us who knows his own weakness and his own needs, to seek first that kingdom of God which gives us the personal Christ, who disappoints no hopes, who dispels all sadness, who completely satisfies so far as he fully inspires every heart that gives to him its loving faith.

Another even more conspicuous example we cannot forbear to notice,—the rough prophet of duty and self-control; in so far enforcing the Christian ideal, but leaving out of that ideal its peculiar Christian elements,—forgiveness and charity, pardon and hope. He was self-denying and upright indeed, but showed little sympathy with the Christ who confronted him with the strange mystery of his tender love and heroic patience, but for whom he could find no loving and grateful affection. It is not surprising that he had for a while forgotten the prayer of his childhood, with the Father in heaven whom it recognizes and worships. Most touching is the record of the discovery which he made in the loneliness of his old age, when in the tossings upon his bed at midnight the old prayer came back to his mind and to his lips, after the disuse of forty years, as a new revelation that he had indeed a Father in heaven. In that discovery made by any man is the revelation of Christianity as a religion when contrasted with Christianity as a philosophy.

3. Science and culture re-enforce the claims of the kingdom of God as first and foremost. The kingdom of God can never be left behind by the onward march of human progress, or the ever-widening sphere of culture and development. The more it expands, and the

nobler and fuller it becomes, the more it requires its life-giving influence and its corrective restraints. The more a man knows, and the more powerfully he thinks, the more distinctly will he recognize the variety of its claims, and the more sensitively will he feel the force of its motives. Hence, to the scholar and the man of culture the command is most imperative, "Seek first the kingdom of God."

This kingdom is both individual and social. It begins with the individual indeed. It can do nothing except it transforms the springs of action within him, but it does not end with the individual. It proposes to regenerate society also, and so to renew both that every individual act and every social agency shall be in harmony with the original ideal of God. Its Founder in his humility declared the kingdom of God to be like leaven which rests not till it pervades and restores the mass unto itself. And when he sat upon his throne, he said, "Behold, I make all things new."

The perfected human society that is to be, is wider even than the Christian Church, if we conceive the Church as a society with special arrangements for Christian teaching and Christian worship. As thus defined, the Church would be one of many organisms in the perfected kingdom of God, like the heart in the human body, vital and central to the whole, but acting side by side with other organisms, each with special functions, as those of science and art, and culture and wealth, and commerce and civil government. It is no secret that these great forces in human society have within the last century been distinctly recognized as never before, and the laws which control them have been made the subject of special scientific inquiry. It is equally notorious that the investigation of these forces has often been conducted in an atheistic spirit, which, from starting-point

to goal, has found no place for freedom in man, or for guidance or hope from God. Hence, human progress has been resolved into the blind working of forces as blind. The perfection of man has been predicted as the necessary outcome of the final adjustment of the manifold forces that shall heave and dash in blind fury, till they subside in the equilibrium of an ocean of rest. One of these agents is man, who, till of late, had thought himself free and responsible, and dreamed that he could direct these forces to results of reason. But science has discovered that among all these agents he is least of all independent, because from the complexity of his being he is eminently the product and slave of all the rest. Are these conceptions just? Are these inferences authorized? We grant that as in nature, so in human society, force and law have been found in ten thousand examples in which their presence was once never dreamed of. We also know, that by these discoveries we can interpret myriads of phenomena in the history of nature and of man, which hitherto had been unsolved mysteries, and that we can predict and produce results which were once thought to be removed from man's foresight and man's control. But the question still returns, and with an energy and an interest as never before, Have force and law crowded God out of being? Is nature so full of forces so complete in their adjustments that there is neither place nor occasion for God? Is God's providence over man and society proved impossible, because the agencies by which he works are more numerous, more wide-reaching, and more definite, than men had formerly supposed? Has man ceased to be responsible and free, because he finds himself more dependent on social appliances for the spheres of his activity and the instruments of his actions? or does the enlargement of these spheres of action elevate and enforce his sense

of freedom and duty? Is our sense of manhood to be crushed out of us by the appalling discovery that our manhood is made for us, and not by us? Is personality, with its hopes and its possibilities, to be abandoned, and with it the only inspiration to our goodness, and the only comfort that is left for our wickedness? Is individual responsibility, with its rapturous joys and its wholesome terrors; are man's earthly sympathies and affections, with his heavenly aspirations and hopes; is prayer, with its trust, its cry, and its praise before the living God; are patient imitation and humble confidence in Christ, — are all these to vanish at the touch of the new analysis? or shall this analysis cause man's personality only to spring into more striking contrasts as against law and nature?

Moreover, as we look out upon the heavings of modern society, are we quite satisfied with the aspect of the forces which are raging beneath, if there is no beneficent God whose thundering is louder than the roaring of these waves, and whose gentle whisper can subdue the hearts of the most violent? Are we not sometimes appalled at the thought of what may happen in the gigantic movements of our modern life, should the faith of man in the living God be practically abandoned, and the new faith in some abstract figment be set up in its place, — whether the figment should be capital or labor, or monopoly or freedom, — whether it be some old or new despotism, or some old or new nihilism? Would we not feel more safe in trusting the future of the nations under some possible stress of modern society to the Shepherd of Israel, who guides his flock in answer to their trust, rather than to the stumbling Polyphemus of modern negations, who blindly feels his way along the solitary shores of eternal vacancy, upon which the wild waves are ever sounding their wail of despair.

We are not left, nor are we driven, to these appalling conclusions. The new sciences of nature in enlarging the domain of law have only emphasized the agency, and enforced the presence, of God. Every new force which has been discovered, and every new law which has been formulated, have only brought into more striking relief the truth that the living God is the rational complement and solution of both force and law. So it is, and so will it be, with the science which deals with social forces and economies. Every new social agency that is discovered, and every law that is fixed, reveals society as more complicated, and as requiring more imperatively the guidance of the living God. Every new discovery concerning man's well-being is but a new arena for the ampler exemplification of the kingdom of God. In the light of these conclusions we enforce the obligation which rests upon educated men to seek first this kingdom in its applications to social relations. There was never a time when the opportunity was so inviting for intelligent men to apply Christian principles to social improvement; never a time when a more diversified, enterprising, and instructed Christian zeal and self-sacrifice were more needed; never a time when these influences were more essential to preserve the hopes of men from fatal disappointment, or to inspire rational courage in those who would live and die for human progress and perfection. Duties of this sort cannot be discharged without knowledge. Hence knowledge in every case, and in some cases scientific knowledge, becomes a religious duty. The devotion of a seraph to the best interests of man cannot insure the social elevation of a community, either in the state, the school, or the family, unless the conditions of such elevation are well understood. In what we call the simpler duties of every-day life, our instructed common

sense may be sufficient; but, for the more complicated questions which concern even ordinary matters, ampler and exacter knowledge is needed. Much more is this true when we are brought face to face with the more complicated relations of modern life. As questions of property become more refined, as the adjustments of rights are more difficult, as political parties rise and fall, as the relations of the community to pauperism, to crime, to education, to capital and labor, open new inquiries, they cannot be answered without intelligence and thought; and intelligence and thought are but other names for science.

The thinker and the scholar who would seek first of all this kingdom in any kind of social progress must act with an enlightened judgment. When science is needed, he must listen to her voice. To refuse to heed her suggestions, is to sin against the truth. To be satisfied with traditional opinions or customary ways, is to sin against the right and against God. To limit the range of one's duties to the religious sphere, or to make a conscience only of the commonly recognized moral duties, when the kingdom of God comes daily to our doors in some appeal of public usefulness, is to fail to understand what this kingdom requires.

But science to instruct and convince must be free. The guide must lead and not follow. To throw light upon man's social duties, she must study man's nature and the laws of his social relations. But she need, therefore, not deny duty, or resolve conscience into a phantasm, or the moral aspirations into nervous secretions, or conscience into the sympathy and fashion of the hour. If she does, she may properly be called to revise her experiments, and to be cautious in her conclusions; and most reasonably, so long as we seek first the kingdom of God, or assume that duty and God are

supreme. But science, rightly considered, is as much a necessity in the kingdom of God as is the so-called Christian Church. It is a necessity to the Church itself; giving it the history to which it appeals, the criticism by which it interprets, the physics that declare the glory of God, the knowledge of man that vindicates his dignity and unfolds his destiny, the morals and the jurisprudence by which man's actions are regulated, and the literature by which the ideals of the present and future life are beautified and ennobled. The kingdom of God thus conceived and enforced, which provides on the one hand for all these conditions of human welfare, which inspires knowledge as a religious duty, and stimulates culture as an act of worship, can neither fail to furnish the occasion nor the motive for our first and supreme affections, and our promptest and most complete obedience. No aims in life can possibly be so elevated or inspiring as those which it proposes. No enthusiasm can possibly be so rational and so ardent. No motives are so grand as the motives which it applies. No reward is so satisfying as those with which it crowns the humblest and the most exalted of its followers. The least of human beings in intellect and culture have found a place in this kingdom for forgiveness and hope: the greatest have found in it room large and wide enough for their loftiest ambition, their most varied activities, and their purest satisfaction.

4. The kingdom of God is destined to a continued conflict, and for this reason it requires that its friends should make it the supreme object of their love and service. Its existence implies a struggle with evil. Its progress consists in a series of conquests. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. There is no need to specu-



late about the existence of a personal devil, as long as sin is so often incarnated in man. We need not inquire whether he has horns or hoofs, so long as he stands at our street-corners, and opens our grog-shops and brothels, or deals bribes in our politics, or preaches atheism in our pulpits; so long as the most dangerous and malignant evil spirits may be those most accomplished in human insight and attractive in human graces. Each age has its own battle to fight, and its own victory to win. The age in which we live displays its own boding signals along the sky. Speculation and unbelief are in some quarters gaining ground. Scientific and materialistic atheism was never so confident, and never so fair spoken and so bland. Literary and critical anti-supernaturalism was never so well assured, and never so courteous, and contemptuous of faith in God. Popular godlessness was never so extreme, and never so little dreaded. The fervor and faith of many professed believers were never more fitful and feeble — avowedly to themselves, and manifestly to others.

On the other hand, there is much seeming love for man, if less conscious love of God; greater enthusiasm for human welfare in this life, if less zeal for man's salvation in the life to come. The reasonableness of consecration to God in love and worship is more generally consented to if it could only be proved that Christ can show us the Father, and God can really be known and loved by men. The person and the name of Christ, it may be, as we have reason to believe, receive fervent homage from many hearts who inquire with critical questioning who he is and whence he came.

In these avowals and these concessions on either side, there are the elements of a definite crisis which sooner or later must come, and may break upon us very soon. If men do not contend with one another as sharply as of old,

their faiths and misgivings, their aspirations and their hopes, are sure to meet in the shock of some great battle of opinion, or in the complicated evolutions of a protracted strife that shall reach every thoughtful man and woman. Men feel something like the lull which precedes the earthquake. The great questions which occupy the thoughts of men will not always be whispered in secret. Sooner or later they will cry out for an audible answer of Yes or No. Thinking men will ask their teachers and one another, "Tell us, is there a living God who hears the prayers of men, and guides their lives, and comforts their sorrows, and forgives their sins? Has he been revealed in Christ, whose kingdom cannot fail, or is Christ only a symbol and a formula?" To these questions every believer in the kingdom of God will be expected to give his answer by a life of supreme devotion to his Master. To every one who says, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ," the response will come with authority, "Then seek first the kingdom of God." This demand will be more intelligent than ever before, because men have never understood so well as now what this kingdom is, and what it imports. It will be more than ever searching and uncompromising, because it will be tried by severer tests than ever, — the test of a Christian civilization without Christ, and a theistic morality without the living God. See to it, my hearers, that you are prepared to endure this test, and prove what the world has often seen before, — that the faith of the scholar is the noblest stuff out of which martyrs can be made.

5. The last reason why we should seek first the kingdom of God, is that its triumph is assured. The Christian cause is never so near a victory as when it is driven to the wall. It thrives by conflict and discussion. Faith becomes heroic when there are few who believe, and when belief is the result of many misgivings and

profound reflection. Loyalty, gratitude, and consecration are stimulated in every true-hearted though hitherto faint-hearted believer when Christ is denied and dishonored by those about them. Injustice and wrong to the truth and to goodness call forth the zeal and exertion of men in any good cause. The very danger of defeat and the need of defenders have raised armies of heroes in times of pressure and distress. When little can be accomplished by zeal and sacrifice, the impulse and call are feeble to make the cause of one's friend or country the first and present object of one's life. When faith and piety have a feeble life unassailed by doubt or dishonor, the defenders of both may be listless and torpid. But when the believer lives in a godless and self-indulgent generation, and God needs him as a positive witness, and Christ as a bold disciple, and man can be saved or lost through his personal fidelity, then every thing that is noble or heroic within him is stirred up to seek first the kingdom of God because it is in peril. For these reasons the season of its extremest danger has often been the time of its most signal triumph.

The history of Christianity in the past is but a repetition of a series of victories gained by apparent defeats, of onward movements succeeding discouraging retreats. Its darkest hour in the view of man was when its Master was fixed in shame and agony to the cross, and then raised before the sight of men that they might behold the end of the vaunted king and his kingdom. That was the hour of his triumph, as he himself proclaimed, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The cross of dishonor became his throne of power; the suffering victim became a reigning king over the hearts of men whom he had subdued by his love in death; and the crown of thorns a diadem of glory, the radiance of which is brighter and brighter as it streams through the ages.

Men of education and culture know the history of this kingdom since. They know what it has done for man, and against what fearful odds. They can know as none others how much it is needed at the present. They can judge as none others that it must be all that it purports to be, or it is nothing. If God is not the living God, what is he to me? but if he is, then how much! If Christ is not all that he has promised to be, why should I believe him at all? But if he is, in whom else should I trust, and for whom should I live but for him? If the kingdom of God is worthy of my faith, then it shall certainly and gloriously triumph. If its truths and facts are not equal to the demands and exigencies of modern society, if its principles of life and character are certain to be outgrown, then it is a sham and an imposture. But if it is true, it is everlasting, and its triumphs will become more and more complete, and more and more manifest. Either Christ is competent to control the world's thinking and acting for all time, or he was a romantic dreamer or a self-conscious impostor. That he was neither, is proved to the scholar by the world's history, not merely of external progress and dominion, but of the spiritual and transforming power of Christ's character, Christ's teachings, and Christ's promises. What this kingdom has come to be, when traced from what it was in the beginning, demonstrates what its triumphs are to be in the future. What it has done against such fearful antagonisms within and without, — in man's individual being and in the various forms of organized iniquity, — is decisive of what it will do for the world in the coming generations.

Are we appalled at the possible evils which may befall this kingdom in our time, and does it become us to forget what mightier evils it has overcome in times that are gone? Should we overlook the fact that many of

the agencies that once were arrayed against her, have been subjected to her victorious power, and are now become organized as her allies? Should we forget what learning and wit, and government and wealth, and fashion and tradition, have been able to accomplish to her harm, and to overlook what all these agencies are now doing for her help? Is it romantic or presumptuous to believe that when the great social forces that unite men so closely, and control them so completely, shall be more thoroughly Christianized, their energy and swiftness shall be such as cannot be computed by any measurements of the past, nor imagined in our most romantic hopes? Do we know any thing of history, and yet fail to observe that Christianity has also created forces of might which are original with herself, in affections and habits, and principles and tastes and institutions, for which there are not even words in the ante-Christian vocabulary, which have yet become watchwords and inspirations to the noblest men who live, and are carved on the monuments of the noblest who are dead? Was not our own civil war kindled by a fire that could never have been lighted except on Christian altars? Has not modern commerce carried precious freights of a message that had not been accepted by the faiths of other times, and could not have entered into their imaginations? Is it not even true that Christianity is assailed in the name of principles which she herself has sanctioned, and by the application of a spirit which she brought into life? We are not unmindful of modern unbelief, and its plausibility to beguile and mislead. Ought we to be unmindful that its most skilful assailants have forged their weapons in the fires of her altars, and dared to assail the actual Christ by using the very ideals which Christ himself inspired? Surely the man who can interpret the signs of the certain triumph of the kingdom of

God needs no incitement to seek its interests first of all as the great business of his life.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,*— We have asked you to this place to hear, as our last injunction, that ye seek first the kingdom of God. You have been trained in Christian homes, you have breathed the atmosphere of Christian culture, you have been educated in Christian schools and a Christian college. You have been moulded by the plastic energy, and have been penetrated by the spirit, of a Christian civilization. The kingdom of God in a sense has been around you since your birth, and to many, perhaps to more of you than know it, the kingdom of God is in some good sense already formed within you. We exhort you, in the circumstances that now surround you, to seek first the kingdom of God. As you look back upon the past, with its blessings and its reproaches, with its encouragements and its monitions, with its sorrows and its joys, as you look forward to the future, with its hopes and its fears, with its misgivings and its anticipations, we bid you resolve with new and stronger purposes to make this kingdom of God supreme. Should each and all of you do this, as you may, the world will feel your presence and your power, it will bless your very name, it will return to your own hearts ample blessings, and more grateful praises than can come by any other means.

Seek this kingdom, then, in its true and noblest import, as only men of knowledge and culture can understand and feel it. Seek its character and spirit in the perfect ideal of manhood which commands your homage, and which you can appreciate better than those whom knowledge has not enlightened, and culture has not refined. Seek its Christ in the mystery of his manifestation to man, in the spirit in which he lived, and in the

death which he died that he might become the world's rightful master and king. Seek to know what this kingdom can become in the light and by the aids of modern science and culture. Seek it the more earnestly because its claims are now called in question, and it needs friends who shall be earnest and self-sacrificing, even unto death. Last of all, seek it because its triumphs are sure.

Let this be the aim of your life, and your life cannot be a failure. All these things besides that men seek after shall be added unto you. The kingdom for which you live is God's. The great forces of nature are his. The tides in the affairs which bear them onward to success, or sweep them outward into disappointment and failure, are controlled by his providence; and he never fails to give success to the man that seeks first whatsoever is true, whatsoever is honorable, whatsoever is lovely, whatsoever is of good report.

Here you have led a happy life. As you look back upon it by a glance, and gather it into a single picture, it is bright and lovely, with here and there a dark shadow. One attracts your notice within the near past, in the death of the honorable, lovely, and accomplished Heald, whom so many were loath to part with, and will not soon forget. To him it was of little consequence whether he were to stay or go, as, whether he should be here or there, he was of the kingdom of God. Should all of you seek this first, whether you live or die, you are at home. May those who are to live the longest, make the world brighter and better by having lived in it! and may those who are to die the soonest, anticipate the spirit and life which shall prepare you for the perfect life with God!

With these wishes and prayer, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## XIV.

### *THE EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF.\**

"TAKE HEED, BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF, IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD." — *Heb. iii. 12.*

THE Christian doctrine of faith and unbelief is as original and peculiar as the Christian system itself. It is an offence to superficial thinkers, and a puzzle to many believers, who stumble at what they conceive to be its contradictions or its mysticism. Faith, say these critics, is the gift of God ; and, again, it is an act of man. Faith, on the one hand, is conviction founded upon evidences. Faith, on the other, must be warmed by the emotions, and controlled by the will. Faith is every thing, if it only carries the inner man ; but, again, faith is nothing if it does not show itself in the actions, and pervade the outer life.

Modern ethics and politics also are continually beset by the questions how far men may be responsible for acting out their faith in words and deeds which society and the state forbid. The Mormon pleads for license to obey God rather than man by his religious harlotry. The fanatic murders his own child, or the nation's glory and pride, in the name of inspiration from God. Ever since Christianity set up its demand of obedient faith against the counter-demand of the Roman Cæsar, down to the present moment, the right to form and act out

\* *June 25, 1882.*



one's faith has been alternately asserted and denied. To adjust these claims and counter-claims has cost Europe countless persecutions, and protracted and desolating wars, all of which have turned upon the questions, What is it to believe? In whom ought I to believe? How can faith be a duty, and unbelief a sin? Men have thought to cut these knots by contending that faith is not a matter of duty at all; because, forsooth, the creeds and opinions of men are made for us, and inherited by us. These views are now supposed by many to be scientifically proved by the theories of heredity and environment, joined to the supposed philosophical demonstration that all matters of faith are but the guess-work of fancy concerning that Spirit who can never be definitely known. On this ground, and on this alone, it is contended that the rights of individual faith and of private judgment can firmly stand. On second thought, it will be seen that the modern doctrine of a faith inherited from the past, or the product of environment, leaves no room for individual rights, because a right supposes a responsible individual, whom it defends in the exercise of an act which is emphatically his own, and for which he must answer to himself and his God.

It would be easy to show that toleration for the faith of others is the outgrowth in logic and in fact of that cardinal doctrine of Christian ethics that a man is, to a certain extent, responsible for his faith, so far, and only so far, as his faith is the manifestation and outgrowth of his individual will. What that truth is that every man ought to accept, is wisely left undecided. The spirit of faith is all that we are commanded to possess. But there is one criterion which tests this spirit as the spear of Ithuriel. Faith, to be genuine and good, invariably unites a man to the living God, as a vivid

and ever present reality. Christ brings God near and present to man: therefore, Christ is the central object of faith. Theologies are much, or little, or nothing, as they bring God and Christ near, or remove them far from our souls. Unbelief is evil so far as it cuts a man off from the living God. Unbelief in this sense is a sin, and in this sense it is called an evil in our text; but unbelief is also a calamity greatly to be dreaded, and earnestly to be shunned. In this sense I shall treat of it at the present time. I shall do so because the doctrine is now so generally insinuated, especially among young men of culture, that it is a good and brave thing not to believe; or, perhaps, that it is a necessary thing for one who is sufficiently enlightened to know what the world is now thinking about, and is honest and bold enough to follow his convictions.

The heart of unbelief is evil in four particulars, — in its influence upon a man's character, upon his plans and activities, upon his hopes for his fellow-men, and upon his relations to another life.

1. Unbelief dwarfs and lowers the individual man so far as it cuts him off from God. It lowers and limits his intellect. Our intellects, and our intellectual solutions of the problems of the universe, carry us back to the comprehensive intellect of the living God. Every discovery of a cause or a force suggests a more comprehensive force behind, who is surely none the less a force because He is intelligent. Every discernment of law points to a broader and deeper rule or combination of laws beneath. Every indication of purpose opens to wider adaptations, such as unlimited wisdom and goodness best explain. Every chain of development brings out in more luminous relief its prophecy passing into history, and its history explained by prophecy, both binding us by a golden chain to the throne of the living

God. Science, or intellectual insight, viewed subjectively, is known to be the work of an intelligent person, classifying and interpreting under the necessary laws of his own activity. Science, objectively viewed, most satisfactorily completes its universe by an intelligent person in whose image man is formed, and whose reason and will man interprets. Do you say that a self-existent person is a mystery that logic and science cannot fathom, and therefore cannot accept? We reply that it is no more a mystery than is a dependent intelligence, which is bewildered by the greater mystery which it seeks to fathom. The living God, whom faith projects as the background of the universe, is no more really an enigma than the living men whom science cannot fail to find in its foreground, because they do the work of science. The man who has never thought of this, or, thinking of it, does not accept it as true, has narrowed his mind. Whether his unbelief is that of the stolid earthworm, or the quick and large-minded intelligence, who, in the multitude of his works and ways, has few or no thoughts of God, he neglects or excludes the highest and noblest relations that man can recognize. Such narrowness is essentially evil, and most of all if it is self-satisfied, and contemptuous of that truth of which it is willingly ignorant. Unbelief also depresses the imagination. While faith provides a solid basis of facts and truths, it stimulates the imagination to an intense and glowing activity. While its comprehensive verities are the most certain and solid of all truths, as God and Christ, and duty and immortality, the particulars in which these may be exemplified are (very largely) left to the creative and constructive power. Faith bids the imagination to soar, but it bids it to soar on a strong and steady wing. Faith warrants the belief in the immortal life. It holds this belief with the confidence

of demonstration. While it confesses that it can give no exact information as to what that life may be, it boldly gathers from actual experience the most satisfying suggestions, and out of them constructs the most exalted and rapturous ideals of what men may hope for. It justifies us in following our departed friends in the unseen sphere with the assured hope of a blessed life. So far our conceptions are distinct and rational; but the nature of the heavenly habitations, and the modes of communication of heart with heart, are left to the chastened fancy to anticipate. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; and yet by the suggestions of a purified imagination, steadied by faith, man has been lifted in his aspirations and hopes up to the noblest ideals of what is possible for himself and for his fellow-men. These thoughts explain the power which the Christian faith has exerted over literature, and through literature over the manhood of the human race. They show why, so soon as the Christian virtues begin to be held less fervently and less positively, the imagination becomes feebler and more unsteady, and the energy and fervor of poetry decline. The faith of one generation may blossom into the poetry of the generation that follows; but if faith is actually dead, the imagination must soon follow to its tomb. No more striking example of the impotence of an uncertain faith to flash into true poetic fire can easily be found than that furnished in the example of the gifted critic and essayist who has so recently died. *Emerson* united a sharp common sense to a profound yearning after the unseen with what should have been a glowing imagination. But his reverent aspirations for the unseen were slow in assuming the energy of a definite faith, and his many attempts to soar were singularly awkward and abortive. In the

field of poetry he produced no fruits such as were worthy of the capacities of his singularly gifted nature. Though reverent before the spiritual and unseen, his faith cast no clear and steady light upon the gorgeous vistas which were opened to his gaze ; and hence these were usually vistas in illuminated cloud-land. From any less reverent type of thinkers, who in our day so positively and scornfully deny that God can be known, neither poetry nor fiction can be expected. The imagination shrivels before the frosty breath of the polar regions in which they dwell. Satire and scorn, and analysis and logic, may be fostered by the evil heart of such unbelief, but poetry and eloquence never.

I need not say that the character of a man, especially of a man of culture, depends very largely upon the type and fervor of his imagination. According as his ideals are high or low, according as they are clear or vague, such will be the man himself. If his intelligent faith brings him into the constant and vivid presence of the living God, his character will be lifted upwards by the fervor of his stimulated and sustained imagination. Unless this stimulus is renewed and inspired by constant visions of the living God, there is danger that he will either sink to the selfish and mean, or be the victim or sport of any romance which caprice or fashion or ambition may inspire. Lord Bacon knew not how pregnant was the truth which he uttered, "They that destroy God, destroy man's nobility." It has been signally fulfilled by the acts of those atheists of our time, who, in order to destroy God, have been so eager to immolate man on the altars of materialistic denial.

Unbelief weakens and misleads the conscience. Whatever theory we may form of the grounds of the authority of the conscience, there can be no doubt that faith in God hallows and enforces that authority. How-

ever potent and sacred is its voice when uttered alone, it is ineffably more sacred when it is also recognized as the voice of God. So intimate are the relations of the two, that it may be seriously doubted whether the one does not involve the other. Practically, and in fact, we know that the actual energy of conscience rises and falls with a man's sensibility to God's presence and God's will. We ought not to be surprised, that, when modern atheism resolves God into a vague abstraction or a poetic metaphor, the conscience should be resolved into a progressive public sentiment, or into fickle associations, or brute authority. In any event, so soon as it is lowered to the level of man's judgment, it is no longer held sacred as the court in which God tries the heart. We grant, that, unless man consents to the awards of God as just, these awards need not move him; but experience shows, that, to give to either sentence or judge a quickening and controlling power, God must be present in the court of conscience, — the God from whose penetrating eye no man can escape, and to whose approving or condemning voice no man can be indifferent. Let this presence be withdrawn by unbelief, and conscience will cease to be the sacred and elevating force which it was before; and the light of the soul will give way to a darkness which may be felt, — the darkness of a conscience that is deluded or dead. Remember, when the living God leaves the conscience, then every thing that is good goes with him: the self-respect, the self-control, the sensibility to high ideals, the deference to the feelings of others, the nice sense of honor, the delicate regard to truth of thought and truth of statement, the control of the animal appetites, and whatever else duty enjoins or high ideals inspire, — all these give way under subtle and powerful temptations, especially those in which modern life abounds.

2. The heart of unbelief works fatal evil in the conduct of life, in respect to its theory and achievements. So far as it excludes the living God from either, it blasts its blossoms, and blights its fruits. The extent to which it prevails differs greatly with different men. Let us begin at the lowest point of negation, and suppose a man to be in theory an atheist or agnostic. We group the two together, because it is practically all the same with the effects upon the plans and acts of one's life whether a man denies there is a God, or denies that man can know him. Strictly speaking, such a man has no right to any plan of life at all. A plan on his part supposes order in the economy of nature, to which he may adapt his expectations and his acts. But for his faith in such order, this man can give us no reason. Should he reply that without such order presumed he can neither understand himself nor control his own life, he does by this very answer abandon his atheism, and throw himself into the everlasting arms of the living God. Whether he will confess it or not, every man — so far as he has any plan or hope for the future, or any theory or hope in life — must live by faith in the Unseen as a living and rational power.

Leaving this point, it may suffice us to trace a few of the beneficial influences which faith imparts, and unbelief withholds, in the conduct of life. Faith in God justifies self-respect, and the assertion and defence of one's individual rights. In the light of God's presence, every individual man expresses an individual thought of his Creator. He is no undistinguished molecule, like a thousand or a million of his fellows, each of which might take the place of any other, and all of which would not be missed if extinguished; but each living man has an individual life, with ends peculiar to himself; and as such, each is respected and cared for by the living

Person, in whom all souls have their life. Holding this place in the plan of God, he is not only permitted, but he is bound, to respect himself. The more brightly and keenly the light of God shines upon himself, and in one sense reveals his feebleness, the more distinctly does it reveal his importance, and justify him in asserting it, so far as he asserts it in the name of God. In the godless theory of the universe, individual men are momentary products of nature's loom, — woven and unravelled as they make up the progressive woof of human history, after the pattern of a slowly perfected humanity. The individual is nothing: humanity is every thing. One soul comes, and another goes: each is made by its place and for its place; but both endure for a moment, and are gone. Before the relentless march of this advancing horde, each single soul is trampled into annihilation and forgetfulness. From the crest of this foaming sea, myriads of drops are, for an instant, whirled into life, glisten in forms of beauty, and are then whelmed by the cruel waves. Human rights and joys, human affections and hopes, human responsibilities and fears, are but the flying foam on these restless waves which, with accelerated speed, are hurried toward the ocean. It is easy to see how, under the influence of such a theory, man becomes reckless of himself, and unfeeling towards his fellows.

Indeed, he cannot well be otherwise. Denying his own dignity in the sight of God, he denies love and justice to his fellow-man. The materialistic atheism of ancient and modern schools, from the loftiness of its isolated position, and under the hazy light of its broad generalizations, dismisses all consideration of individual rights and individual well-being, under the contemptuous but convenient appellation of sentimental considerations. But the moment a man sees himself in the light of the living God, he finds reflected from that light the



bright radiance of an individual importance and a separate sphere of duty and of right to himself and his fellow-men.

Human history tells a uniform story how, as faith in the living God has come and gone in the earth, man has risen and fallen in his own self-respect. It tells us how, as he has risen to the dignity of his nature, and then fallen below it, he has been prompt to appreciate and defend his rights, or quick to waive and surrender them. It also tells us how, in the same degree that he has been careless of these high interests for himself, he has been indifferent to them for others.

Faith in God also assures every man that he has a work to do. If he has an individual existence by the creative fiat that a sustaining Providence affords, he has also a sphere to fill and a service to render, to which he is called by the same living God. This sphere is his, and his only, if he can but find it; and if he seeks for it humbly and earnestly, he cannot fail to discover it. Such a faith in one's place in life lifts a man once for all above depressing care and belittling anxiety. He is no longer his own servant, but God's minister. If he lives, he lives not to himself; if he dies, he dies not to himself. It is true that in the conditions of earthly life, competition and struggle and rivalry are often the only methods of determining one's own place and advancement. These are the wholesome conditions of our earthly existence; but it is none the less true that by means of them, the call of God to a post of duty is made known. These assignments often seem unequal and unjust. The prizes of life, after the fairest competition, do not always conform to merit. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but the discipline of disappointment is often most salutary; and the trial of seeing injustice triumph is often most

useful. To endure trials like these, faith is most of all needed. To yield to brute force and inexorable law without the confidence of faith, is hard enough; but to accept injustice from man without the belief that God makes such submission to be our duty, is harder still. When we say that faith assigns to every man a place for service, we do not overlook the truth that the task assigned may be a task of suffering and disappointment, perhaps of outrageous injustice and hopeless defeat. All that we assert is, that it will be assigned by the Master, and that if it can be accepted in faith, the darkest passages of life become luminous with the presence and smile of the Father of spirits.

Life is no holiday, whether we live with God or without him. But it makes an enormous difference whether a man is summoned to suffering and loss, to grief and disappointment, by the call of the personal God; or dragged to agonizing horror by the voice of blind and unrelenting fate. Life, however, to most men, brings more or less of enjoyment and success, — most of all to the man who finds good in any sphere of action and duty. I need not say that no man can so reasonably find a bright side in the darkest events of life, as he along whose path are ever streaming rays of hope and brightness from the presence of the Father of spirits.

3. The heart of unbelief is evil, because it weakens or destroys all rational grounds for hope in man's social progress. Though a man's individual character and career are specially important to himself, he can never forget that he reaches them very largely through others. What he is and what he does, so far as he is responsible, must be ascribed to his individual will; but what he is, in another most important sense, and what he can make of himself, must depend to a large extent upon his fellow-men. The germ and nucleus of man's

being is this individual self ; but the growing and cultivated man, the living and loving man, depends on what he appropriates in what is now called his social environment ; that is, upon the civilization, the manners, the laws, and institutions which constitute his atmosphere and his food. Every individual carries in his very blood the physical taint or the physical life which heredity transmits. Every home is more or less a training-school from or towards the living God. With almost every breath, we inhale the moral atmosphere of a purified or tainted public sentiment. The manners we witness or imitate, the words we hear or repeat, the sympathies or antipathies which we cherish or reject, are constantly weaving webs of subtle associations, which, "though light as air, are strong as links of iron," to hold us towards or back from goodness. So far as we act for ourselves, we are independent and free. So far as God acts upon us and for us, he acts largely through social agencies. These forces and these laws act upon us through their relations to ourselves and to others,—to ourselves, for what we may expect to receive through their influence ; to others, in what we anticipate for the future of the race.

Faith in the living God is man's only warrant for a confident and reasonable hope in the progress of man under these social appliances. It holds this progress to be provided for in the plan of human history. It finds satisfying evidence that this plan has been steadily carried forward in the past. It exercises a sober imagination when it foresees the enormous force for good which lies hidden in the laws and manners, in the literature and art, that are to be, when they all shall be made to serve the Lord Christ. When faith is disheartened by a momentary retrogression, it needs only come nearer into the presence of the living God, and its

courage and hopes for man are at once renewed, and with it, its joy and blessing. If one questions whether unbelief tends to evil, let him notice attentively one of its darkest and gloomiest aspects in that hopeless pessimism of our day, which is rapidly taking hold of a considerable class of cultivated men, as they seemingly reject, or positively ignore, any hope for man in the providential guidance or redeeming spirit of the living God. The godless or animalized unbelief of the masses in our time is dangerous and depressing enough when conjoined with their credulous hopefulness in clutching at every new sham of social or political reform. The silly hopefulness with which a section of materialistic atheists promises for the race a prosperous voyage over the pacific seas to the islands of the blest, on sundry physiological conditions, provokes alternately our wonder or our compassion. But there is no sign of the times that is so dismal as the pessimistic indifference and despair with which so many cultivated deniers of the Christian faith look forward to the future of the race; and simply because their philosophy of the past and their prophecy of the future disdain to acknowledge the living God as an agent of power and blessing. These pessimists are indeed a motley crowd. There are cool and hard-headed materialists, who think they believe in nothing beyond what the fingers can handle and the eyes can discover. There are believers in what they call force and tendency, — self-instructed and self-moving, — more mysterious and mystical, except in name, than the living God, whom they say is now an exploded conception of the past. There are enthusiastic dreamers in human perfectibility, who have seen the dreams of their youth shattered into fragments; and who, with the loss of the silly romances of their youth, have flung overboard their faith after them.

There are not a few, once Christian devotees, who, for many reasons, have turned their backs upon Christ and his Church. There are supercilious critics of the creeds and lives of other men, who profess no earnest creed and no earnest life of their own. There are selfish and self-indulgent favorites of fashion or of letters, who are too dainty for the struggles and sacrifices which human progress involves. There are idle and lazy voluptuaries of the flesh or the spirit, or of both, half philosophers and half Sybarites.

But they all unite in a common cry, — Let the world go, for all we care, to the ruin to which it is doomed, and from which nothing can save it. Reforms and progress in science, in government, in morals, and religion, — all are in vain. And why in vain? Simply because these men have neither faith nor inspiration from the Divine Person, who is ever working salvation in the earth. No greater evil can befall a man of culture and thought, than to sink into such a heartless, faithless, and hopeless mood in respect to himself and his kind. Against its earlier suggestions and its rapidly progressive power, against its supercilious selfishness or its despairing scorn, no man — and especially no young man, and, pre-eminently, no young man of culture — can take heed too earnestly.

Compare, by contrast, the hopes of human progress which the Christian theory warrants and inspires. In the complex movements of social forces, the Divine Father is everywhere present, animating and manipulating each and all, proportioning each to individual energy, and giving energy and effect to each by a skilful and ever modulated touch. In every raging battlefield, within every desolating tornado, through each tumultuous ocean-storm, in the tumult of revolution and anarchy, the presence of the living God, — shall I not

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courage and hopes for man are at once renewed, and with it, its joy and blessing. If one questions whether unbelief tends to evil, let him notice attentively one of its darkest and gloomiest aspects in that hopeless pessimism of our day, which is rapidly taking hold of a considerable class of cultivated men, as they seemingly reject, or positively ignore, any hope for man in the providential guidance or redeeming spirit of the living God. The godless or animalized unbelief of the masses in our time is dangerous and depressing enough when conjoined with their credulous hopefulness in clutching at every new sham of social or political reform. The silly hopefulness with which a section of materialistic atheists promises for the race a prosperous voyage over the pacific seas to the islands of the blest, on sundry physiological conditions, provokes alternately our wonder or our compassion. But there is no sign of the times that is so dismal as the pessimistic indifference and despair with which so many cultivated deniers of the Christian faith look forward to the future of the race; and simply because their philosophy of the past and their prophecy of the future disdain to acknowledge the living God as an agent of power and blessing. These pessimists are indeed a motley crowd. There are cool and hard-headed materialists, who think they believe in nothing beyond what the fingers can handle and the eyes can discover. There are believers in what they call force and tendency, — self-instructed and self-moving, — more mysterious and mystical, except in name, than the living God, whom they say is now an exploded conception of the past. There are enthusiastic dreamers in human perfectibility, who have seen the dreams of their youth shattered into fragments; and who, with the loss of the silly romances of their youth, have flung overboard their faith after them.

There are not a few, once Christian devotees, who, for many reasons, have turned their backs upon Christ and his Church. There are supercilious critics of the creeds and lives of other men, who profess no earnest creed and no earnest life of their own. There are selfish and self-indulgent favorites of fashion or of letters, who are too dainty for the struggles and sacrifices which human progress involves. There are idle and lazy voluptuaries of the flesh or the spirit, or of both, half philosophers and half Sybarites.

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say of the Lord Christ,—is recognized as stilling the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves and the tumult of the people. Notwithstanding the opposing energy of races and nations, the unseen kingdom of God is everywhere gathering strength, and making certain, if not rapid, conquests,—is everywhere gaining a stronger hold on human thought, and rising in larger proportions to a constantly assured strength.

The freedom of the individual man must, indeed, everywhere be respected. The conquests sought for and gained are of the spirit; and, therefore, not one of the agencies employed may infringe upon the responsible freedom of the soul made in God's image. Yet the social agencies for good are all the while gathering strength, and exerting a constantly augmenting influence. The spirit of the living God not only dwells in each single soul to make it a temple for worship and service, but it brings them together into a spiritual organism, which it moulds for a dwelling-place for himself, inspiring each single agency with new energy, and lifting all together into a higher, common life. From one generation to another, the state, the school, and the Church, and the family of men shall become more perfectly animated by the presence, and moulded by the spirit, of the reigning Jehovah.

Animated by a faith like this in social progress, no word can be lost, no prayer can return unanswered, not a cup of cold water can be given in vain: neither sigh, nor song, nor prayer, shall vanish into thin air. The shortest life is eternal in its influence. The life which seems to be wasted is fraught with fruitfulness. The faith that humanity shall be redeemed, is forever assured by the faith that God has taken hold of it that he may redeem it to himself in all its relationships and agencies, and is conducting it toward this bright and blessed consummation.

The man with such a faith has something worth living and laboring for. Hope and not despair is the inspiration of his activities. He has received a kingdom which cannot be moved; and that kingdom is certain to become the joy of the whole earth. That kingdom shall come when the social forces that unite man to man shall be transfigured and controlled by the spirit of the living God, and all individual souls shall rejoice in his presence and his reign. Were a living faith in its promised reality to take the place of the mystical dreams, the cynical contempt, or the selfish despair,—which are bred of the atheistic belief of modern days,—a new energy would be imparted to human hopes, and a fresh inspiration to human activities. The agencies and appliances for social welfare that have been freshly emphasized, the new generalizations and laws of personal and public economy, would all be recognized as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." And the echo should respond, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every hill shall be laid low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." The resistless energy, the splendid enterprise, and the magical discoveries of the present age would be accepted as new tokens that God is moving among men for their good as never before, if men would but recognize his presence and acknowledge his wisdom. We do well to take heed, lest any one of us be so weak as to suppose that atheism is any the more rational because it is fashionable with a few, or that the heart of unbelief is not wholly and desperately evil, in such a hopeful time as this.

4. The heart of unbelief consummates its evil, by unfitting a man for the future life. If the wilful or careless abandonment of faith involves departure from God, and if such departure unfits a man for a truly suc-

cessful life in the present world, how much more for the life which is to be! Even for this life it is fearful to think of the career of a single human being who turns his back upon the living God and goes, step by step, farther and farther from his presence in thought and feeling and aim. If we follow that soul into another life, it were evil enough if it were left alone under the impulses which had gained such headway, and in the direction which habit and consistency had fixed. We instinctively say, when a man deliberately turns his back upon the light, and continues to walk away from it, it cannot be but that the shadow will widen and deepen the farther he goes, whether he prosecutes his journey in the present life or the future. Whatever changes death may make in his circumstances, he must carry into the next world his unchanged self in respect to his moral habits and purposes, in respect to his loves and hatreds, his estimates of God and himself. It would also seem probable that in the future life it will not be so easy to forget God and live without God, as it is in the present; and that for the purposes of trial and discipline and award, the eternal God will be manifested distinctly to every soul, so that he cannot be overlooked or forgotten. The Scriptures teach this most distinctly, whatever else they may be supposed to teach or to fail to convey. The writer of our text, "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God," also says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Whatever else may have been supposed to have been learned or unlearned in regard to the future state, this one lesson has been deepened in every mind by all that we know through nature or revelation, concerning man and God,—that character in this life is prolonged and fixed into destiny in the future and in the moral elements of evil

and good, which must be intensified with manifold energy by the future revelations of God as he is, and by the reflection of man as he will discover what he is, — when tried by these vivid revelations.

If, then, it is an evil thing to cut off one's self from God in the present world, it must be an unspeakably greater evil to depart further from him in the life to come, to be fully alive to what one has lost in turning from God, and also to know that he is under the deepening shadow of his displeasure, and that he does not desire to return. From such a destiny every one hopes and prays to be delivered. Should some atheist or an agnostic chance to hear me, he would doubtless utter the prayer, If the future state shall make known a God, may I be ready to worship and love him. But let us suppose that not one of us has turned his back upon him, would it not be a fearful waste and loss to allow the springs and habits of our early life to be so little controlled by our faith that we can only hope to be saved as by fire? Would it not be evil if the ambitions and activities and achievements, which we have followed with energy and hope and fear, shall prove to be wretched hay and stubble that shall vanish into smoke under the flame of God's great displeasure? What aspiring young man, even if he could save his soul, would be willing to lose the work of his earthly life? "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,* — It is not because I think you are in special danger from unbelief that I have selected this theme. It is rather that I may exhort you with greater courage and hope to fight the good fight of faith.

The fact is not to be disguised, however, that faith

is destined in these days to meet many a contest, and that unbelief, in some of its aspects, was never more imposing to men of culture than it is at the present time. There is no use in whining or whimpering about the times in which we live. Our business is to defend the truth as we believe it; and to defend it because we know its worth and its power. There is little service done to any good cause by those who do little more than groan over the degeneracy of the times, or the unworthiness of their fellow defenders of the truth. The times are, in a certain sense, not made by us, but for us. It is our wisdom and our duty to take them as we find them, and make them better as far as we may.

Unbelief is, indeed, somewhat conspicuous in the high places of thought, and assumes a positive tone. It has entered upon almost every region of speculation and research in philosophy and science, in literature and history; and claims, with a confidence that often is sheer affrontery, that the excess of light which has flashed upon these new fields has only made darkness visible in the encircling domain in which, hitherto, faith had dreamed of unseen glory and immortal love. As the result of these activities, many old opinions have assumed new relations and put on new aspects; and a general disposition to question even the most sacred truths prevails among not a few quick-minded and mercurial thinkers. Credulous haste in accepting the last suggestions of the fancy has taken the place of critical scrutiny; and positive assertion, if not insane credulity in propounding paradoxical conclusions, is now and then accepted as solid evidence for the truth. It is not surprising that the advocates of the old faith should sometimes have been filled with alarm under the circumstances, and that this alarm should now and then have been intensified into a panic.



Under these circumstances it has seemed to me proper to remind you that unbelief in the sacred verities, as a practical force, is fraught with disappointment and deceit for this life and the future; and, therefore, it is presumed to be itself false and deceitful. I do not expect and do not desire that your faith should, in any particular, go beyond evidence, or assume any other form than rational conviction. But I do urge that this conviction should be large and liberal in the data on which it rests, and should include among these data of proof a just estimate of the practical worth of faith in duty and immortality, in God and Christ as the springs and motives of action and the inspiration of life. This argument is thoroughly legitimate, and is especially appropriate to your condition as you go forth into a more or less widened sphere of active service, — a sphere in which your culture here will be tried pre-eminently by your manhood and character. The oft quoted saying of Goethe, "The world's history is the world's court of judgment," is as true of our faith as it is of our character, and for the reason that our faith, in the long run, forms our character. You will notice how quickly and sharply in these days men judge of those who were most admired when they were living the moment they are dead; and that it is only the men of faith and fidelity who are honored by the world's second thoughts, as it sits in judgment on its heroes.

It is probably true that very sharp conflicts of opinion await the present generation. It is more than probable that the men of faith and the men of unbelief will be more and more distinctly divided. No evil can come of this, but only good; provided faith in the living God and the present Christ becomes more fervent and constant. The power of faith is in its energy, its patience, and its fervor. You are a small company in comparison

with the mass of humanity without ; but were your solid convictions kindled into fervent heat, you might shake the earth. Fear not for the good cause. That will prevail as certainly as the heavens hang over us, and the sun continues to shine. Let it be yours to trust in the living God by a faith that is as unshaken and fervent as are his truth and love.

Here you have had a more than usually prosperous life. You go forth with the most cheerful recollections of the past, and with hopeful prospects for the future. One of your number who was with you at the beginning of the present year, has been gently removed to the immortal life, heading the long procession in which each of you will take his place at the inexorable call. I shall not soon forget the pensive, yet hopeful, look which he gave me when he bade me good-by, hoping against hope to be with you at this hour. I cannot but think that you all believe and know that the Christian hope in which we stand — founded as it was on Him who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light ; kindled and rekindled as it has been in millions of hearts in all the Christian generations — is the greatest blessing and the noblest inspiration which the world has ever known. May you share abundantly in that blessing, and be animated by that inspiration. May each of you fight the good fight of faith at any cost and any sacrifice, and thus lay hold on eternal life. These are my best wishes for you for this life and the life that is to be, as I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## XV.

### *THE FIGHT OF FAITH.\**

"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE."—  
*1 Tim. vi. 12.*

THESE are spirit-stirring words. They thrill the sense and move the soul like the prolonged call of a trumpet, which begins with a summons to the stern excitement of the fray, and ends with the triumphant notes of anticipated victory. No one can hear or read these words without some response of sympathy, whether the response is felt in his kindled imagination or his consenting conscience; whether his future life glows with the prismatic hues of youthful romance, or reflects the white light of sober reality. Even if we chance to listen to them in an ordinary mood, they arrest the attention, and move the feelings. Much more, if they meet us squarely at one of the halting or turning-places of life, and we bethink ourselves of what we have been or done in the past, and of what we may be or do in the future.

Now and then there comes a crisis in our life, when the past is gathered into a brief story, or condensed into a miniature picture, and we view it at a glance, and pronounce upon it a summary judgment. Similarly we compress our future into narrow limits, and consider what it may possibly become with the divine help; when

\* June 24, 1883.

out of the clouds of uncertainty we hear the inspiring call: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." Such an occasion is present and passing with some of my hearers. It cannot be unprofitable to them to meditate upon the call which the occasion utters so distinctly to themselves; and it need not be to any of us to hear it as addressed to ourselves. I need not say that such a theme admits only a practical treatment, while yet it may not only admit, but require, the recognition of important truths.

1. I notice as the first of these truths, that the Christian life is a *contest*. This is true of life in all its forms. Most men who think, sooner or later find it to be true of their individual experience. To some, indeed, life seems only a play-time of varied excitement, alternating with refreshing and delicious rest. This is the theory of childhood, which takes its views of life from the suggestions of desire, the impulses of passion, and the exhaustless energy of health and hope. To the torpid and unreflecting, life is little more than an alternation between the heavy task-work imposed by blind and hard necessity, and their brief holidays of intoxication and excess. But whenever a man awakes to the realities of his condition, he finds that everywhere, and with all men, life is more or less of a struggle. We find ourselves in the water, and we must swim for our lives. Multitudes about us go down in the struggle, as drops of water are engulfed in the ocean. These barely lift their heads into the blessed light, and sink beneath the waves. Others live longer, as they struggle aimlessly and ignorantly for the nearest and most attractive object, but sooner or later fail, from simple lack of knowledge. Multitudes more are more intelligent in their aims and efforts, but fail for want of courage and perseverance. These obvious generalizations have been matured, of late,

into what is accepted as the ultimate and only scientific view of life in the so-called law of the survival of the fittest in the universal struggle for existence. This law finds a contest everywhere and in respect to every interest, — a contest in every form of being, from the tiniest molecule that makes its first essay of individual differentiation, up to the conquering mind of a Humboldt in science, or a Goethe in imagination and art, as each subdues all things to itself. What is held of individual molecules and Godlike and all-conquering men, is held of institutions and systems of opinion and faith.

All these movements of opinion, whether partial or complete, show that thinking men are coming more and more distinctly to recognize the truth that human life is essentially a contest and a struggle.

I have referred to this theory, because of the contrast which it emphasizes between the scientific and the so-called sentimental view of life. I have also in mind the charge that the Christian theory is sentimental, and not scientific, because, forsooth, charity and forgiveness and patience and humility are its prominent graces, as contrasted with the combative and self-asserting impulses which are supposed to be the only scientific conditions of human well-being. The doctrine of free forgiveness is thought to be inconsistent with the principle that moral strength can only come from a personal struggle. Its promise of help is regarded as a premium upon indolence and presumption; and its reliance on personal sympathy and comfort and grace are said to be inconsistent with the self-dependence which is the prime condition of character and success. In other words, it is charged that the Christian life recognizes no contest at all; and that its injunction to fight the good fight of faith is self-contradictory in its very terms. I do not argue the question here, whether these charges are well

founded. I only refer to the fact that the plainest precepts and assertions of the New Testament are to the effect that the Christian life, from its beginning to the end, is a perpetual and active strife with evil. From the earliest words that meet us in the sermon on the mount, "Strive that ye may enter the strait gate," to the latest, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me," one doctrine is taught and one only; and that is, that the Christian life in all its phases and forms is a continuous contest, in which every variety of energy is called for, and every form of self-denial comes in play.

That the Christian life is a contest, appears still further from the forces or obstacles with which the believer must contend.

First of all, there are the many forms of natural or human evil, — sickness, suffering, disappointment, and personal hostility, — in all their varieties and complications. To all these the believer is exposed; and with them all he must contend in a way peculiar to himself. From not one of them is he exempt by the conditions of his Christian discipleship. To some of these he is made keenly sensitive by the training which they furnish. In common with his fellow-men he must suffer, in fear and endurance, every variety of so-called natural calamity; and resist and overcome each by his faith. There are other powers of evil which spring up from within, and these are far more difficult to detect and oppose. Selfishness as a spring of action must be constantly abjured as the law of activity; and love as constantly received and recognized as the impulse and motive of the inner life. Selfishness assumes protean forms, and can easily disguise itself as an angel of light. Sensuality must be abhorred as an impulse, and rejected as a contamination, whether in its grosser or its more insidious forms. Ambition must be distinctly, yet intelligently, renounced

and overcome. Envy, in its hateful and its more refined manifestations, must be recognized as not only malignant but mean. Avarice must be deliberately disowned as a spring and motive, notwithstanding the attractive guises in which it clothes itself in an age in which riches are so rapidly acquired, and are the instruments of such manifold usefulness and blessing. Personal or party success as a supreme end, even in the service of Christ, must be abjured as a commanding motive, if it calls for the surrender of integrity or honor or justice or truth or charity. The springs and motives of the inner life, the aims and principles and affections, must be watched with constant supervision, and resisted with unsparing rigor, whenever they conflict with the spirit and precepts of the Master.

The Christian must not only contend with evil in himself; he must also contend with it in his fellow-men, singly or combined. All the impulses which we are called on to resist in ourselves, we are equally bound to resist in others; whether they are invested with the charms of an attractive personality, or enforced by official authority or social position. Friendship, business interests, social relations, political or religious affiliations, may put in their pleas for exemption, but the duty still remains to dissent from the opinions and will of a fellow-man when not to dissent implies a consent, and when dissent is plainly called for. I am not here concerned with the spirit with which dissent should be expressed. But when all the qualifications are allowed which charity and skill and patience require, the duty of contending against our fellow-men, when their influence makes for evil, remains a constant and inexorable characteristic of the Christian life.

The duty of contending against evil in our fellow-men also implies and emphasizes the duty of opposing evil

when it takes a social or organized form. The attention of thinking men was never so distinctly and positively directed to this class of duties as at the present moment. In the theories of not a few there are no other evils than those which are social and organized. The bald and once despised theory of Robert Owen — that man individual and social is at once the product and the victim of counteracting circumstances — has been rehabilitated, with much pretension of biological and metaphysical science, till the individual, as it would seem in the theories of many, has become nothing, and society every thing. Man himself, in his so-called individual life, is viewed by many theorists as the product of the vast and complex agencies that have been working from eternity their measures of truth and falsehood, of moral good and evil. Even his standard of duty and of truth, and the very energy by which he is summoned to resist social and organized evil, are but themselves the result and indirect product of those agencies.

However extravagant and one-sided these theories may be, they illustrate and confirm the position that men were never more alive to the truth, that it is their duty and their salvation to contend against social evils of every kind, and in so doing to contend against the men who represent or direct these organized neglects or wrongs. Christianity is not a whit behind the times in its conceptions and calls to this duty. Its language has ever been and ever must be, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." The Christianity which does not aim to purify and reform society, is unworthy of the name; and the Christian disciple who has not the courage and spirit to contend against social agencies of evil, is unworthy of his master. That Christianity does not under-estimate the power of the social and organized forces which have ever stood in its way, is evident



from its language: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." Would we conceive how appalling must have been the sense of the inveterate strength of some of these organized social evils, we may put ourselves in the place of Paul as he landed at the Piræus and walked toward the Parthenon, while his spirit sunk within him as he saw on every hand the indications that the city was wholly given to idolatry, — so utterly that he could find only a remote suggestion as a text for the theism which he would preach, on an obscure altar to a God unknown. Or we may walk with him as he drew near to Rome, a prisoner in the grasp of that mighty empire whose letters and military strength and political organization, whose wisdom and fashion and luxury, were all committed to the apotheosis of a Tiberius or a Nero, and the flames of whose wrath were ready to consume as tinder every unhappy wretch who would not burn incense to the emperor.

Nor should we forget that Christianity itself comes to man as a society of itself, — the invisible but manifestly social, the loosely organized but intensely vital, kingdom of God, — which works like leaven to disintegrate and yet to re-unite all other societies, and to transfigure and transform whatever had been corrupt and destructive in the old social organizations, so as to make them the agents of a new spirit, and ministers of a renewed life.

If any thing further were required to illustrate or enforce the truth that the Christian life is a contest, it might be found in its history. Think first of the inner life of every individual believer, — through what struggles and conflicts it is perfected. Every man who has become stronger in faith, more self-governed, more

patient, more truthful, more prayerful, more serene, more self-possessed, more laborious, more self-denying, knows that he has become so by a constant warfare with antagonistic influences from within. Nor has he relied upon himself alone. In his personal conflict with himself, his better self has been aided by the constant protests of others, uttered or imagined, as he has been conscious of the second conscience, with which he has been enveloped by the approving and reproving voice of the Christianized community in which he lives. Even when he has seemed to be left alone with his God, he has never been able to escape the conscious presence of the Church of God, as enforcing his own inner convictions against evil.

Similarly with the progress of Christianity in the social and general life of the community: whatever has been done in reforming the manners, or improving the legislation, or elevating the literature, or affecting comprehensive changes in social order or organization, has been achieved by a conflict against obstacles, which has been more or less definite or prolonged. That these contests have often been defiled by human passion, and embittered by narrow partisanship; that they have been dishonored by envy and intrigue, and polluted by all sorts of selfish and malignant feelings, — does not in the least disprove or weaken the truth that the Christian life is, and has always been, and always will be a contest; but rather brings out this truth in a more striking relief.

2. The Christian life is a contest of faith. This signifies that it is a contest by means of faith. It is inspired by faith as the spring of its activity, and the condition of its success. At first thought it seems a paradox to think or to speak of a fight by faith, or to connect a contest, which implies individuality and inde-

pendence, with the idea of faith, which implies dependence and help. Perhaps we cannot state the problem, nor solve it, better than by tracing its history in human experience. Before the times of Christ and of Paul, earnest men of many nations, and under a great variety of circumstances, had made an earnest business of the contest with passion and sin in their own souls and in the world about them. The need of this strife they saw and felt, with a clearness and strength of feeling to which the most of men in these easier times are utter strangers. They felt the burdens and sorrows of individual and collective human life. They experienced the impulses to evil as they were constantly revived within their own souls. They were appalled at the energy and strength with which sin organized itself afresh to resist and defy both the individual and joint desires of those who would reform themselves and reform society.

On a sudden, and yet as not wholly unexpected, a few of the race are confronted with a person who overawes them by the mystery of his being, and attracts them by the strangeness of his condescension; who wins their confidence by the largeness of his invitations, and subdues their hearts by his love in death. The effect upon their character and springs of action is a new creation. The few who describe it, like Paul and Peter and John, declare that they were born by it into a new life; and their writings give jubilant expression to the new life of hope and victory which they began to live, through their joyful gratitude to the living Christ. What they say of themselves is observed of others. Scores and hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands, share in the new impulse which has come into human society. This new life is all comprehended in faith in the matchless personality of the dying and risen Christ. "This is the

victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the love of Christ, who loved me and gave himself for me." The story of Christ's life and death is told from believing and loving lips in portraitures so definite and touching as could only have been taken from an original. For nearly sixty generations the story has made substantially the same impression upon the great mass of men who have read it with any sense of their moral needs in the conflict with self and sense and sin; and the story, when believed, has ministered the same peace and rest and hope and joy. Now and then a reader, now and then a school of writers, has fancied or reasoned that some imaginative mythos or cunning deceit had so skilfully invested this central figure of ideal power as to give it the energy and power of a living person; but so diverse have been the explanations, and so fanciful and so discordant their theories, that the world has soon returned to the original version, — that the story contained the truth of God. With here and there an exception, it may be said to be true that every man in all these generations, who has felt and confessed that he has any need of Christ in the contest of life, has felt and confessed that Christ was to him the power and truth of God. To the multitude of believing souls he is at this moment invested with a subduing and transforming power, and reigns, by common acclaim, a monarch over the hearts of the great company of all those who have resorted to him in the stress and need of their lives.

And now what do we learn from this history of faith concerning the nature of faith? First of all, that faith is eminently the act or attitude of a person toward a person. We fight the battle of life under a leader and master and friend, whom we follow and love and obey,

and in whom we trust and triumph and rejoice; in one word, in whom we *believe*. But though we fight the battle by Christ's help and by gratitude toward him, we fight it out each man for himself. Subjectively, faith is an act, a disposition, a loving and obedient will; objectively, it rests on the living Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, and with whom is all sympathizing, all forgiving, and, therefore, all subduing love.

Next we distinguish the practical faith by which a man lives and acts, from the speculative theology by which he reflects and analyzes and reasons. Both are concerned with the same object,—the same person in his relations to man and God. Faith is a very different thing from a theology, though it is the germ of theology; just as a dormant or growing bud is not an expanded or full-grown tree. In both faith and theology there is an intellectual element, because in both we use the intellect. But in the one case we use the intellect that we may feel and love and obey and act; in the other, that we may analyze and explain and conceive and understand. The infant intellect apprehends the rainbow, when this glorious vision from heaven first breaks upon its rejoicing and wondering eyes. No one will question that the physicist uses his intellect, when he analyzes and explains and defines the rainbow by the pulsations of the light. Each uses his mind,—the one, in apprehending the fact in its simple and most obvious relations; the other, in those which are complex and remote. Herein is illustrated the faith and the creed of the practical and the theological believer. They are neither antagonistic nor exclusive. The consummate theologian may have as strong and earnest a practical faith as his unreflecting neighbor. Nay, his faith is so far richer and stronger, as it is justified to his reflective

thinking, and enriched by his ampler knowledge. On the other hand, a well-reasoned creed may be to a slender, practical faith, what an ambitious and well-framed scaffolding is to a scanty and narrow house upon a treacherous foundation. So, again, his practical faith may be rational and effective to a man who can neither state nor defend the convictions which control his life and affections. This distinction is of no slight importance to every earnestly thinking man. It enables us to understand that the Christian faith is practically one in all the varieties of definition and argument which it assumes, and with all the heats and bitternesses which they engender. It justifies the extremest earnestness in theological discussion on the one hand, and the largest charity and confidence and fellowship on the other. It not only sanctions the right, but confers the obligation, to leave many questions unsettled, and yet to cleave with the utmost tenacity to those fundamental facts which are essential to victory.

This brings us back to our theme. Faith, to be efficient, needs not only to be personal, but positive. If faith is to help us against our adversaries, it must be confident and certain. If faith connects us with a person, we must know in whom we believe: *who he is*, so far as to be assured what he will be to us, — what in our joys, what in our sorrows, what in our griefs, and what in our fears, what in our life and what in our death. It follows that if we are to contend *by our faith*, we are to contend *for our faith*; simply because a man without positive convictions, cannot contend at all, especially in an age which is shivering with doubt and uncertainty in every fibre of its intellectual life. At a time when every volume presents a novel theological theory or a new ethical speculation, either a new negation or a new sneer; when the foundations of all sorts of truth were

never so confidently questioned, the best accredited facts so freely challenged, nor the extremest needs of man's nature were so boldly, nor the most sacred of his hopes and aspirations so flippantly, disposed of,—at a time when not a few believing souls are terrified with an undefined alarm, lest perhaps the foundations of their hopes and sacrifices shall sink into a yawning abyss,—at this time the cry of distress is whispered from many lips, and the anguish is felt in many hearts: “Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.” At such a time, love to others, as well as duty to ourselves, requires that every man who has a faith should make it positive, clear, and energetic. No man is worth much in such a strife of opinion and of tongues as now prevails, who does not believe with positiveness, and believe with energy,—the energy of that clear and calm conviction which is sustained by a life which is hid with Christ in God. In the strife and struggle of these days, it is only earnest men who are wanted at the front; let *dilettanti* and critics and carpet-knights go to the rear.

Meanwhile, we may assure ourselves with the belief that these professions of defeat and signals of distress are, in some sort, harbingers of hope. They indicate that multitudes who are confronted by an earnest and witnessing Church are not content to leave the question of a supernatural Christ, without another attempt to settle it. They betoken that there is felt a need of help and strength which, without his help and rest, can never be satisfied. They show that the charm and energy of his unmatched personality are still felt, if not confessed. Past experience indicates that the searching criticism of modern times may render the most efficient service to faith by driving it into its impregnable defences, and forcing it to prove its divine power by such fervor and self-denial, by such spirituality and self sacrifice, as shall

prove that the faith which inspires them rests in the truth and power of the living God.

One thing is certain to be demonstrated and confessed by the contest for faith which is destined to convulse our modern life, and that is the utter and complete inadequacy of any other agency than a living Christian faith to give the victory in the contest of life. If men of thought, as we are told, distrust the guidance and help of the gospel, they do, in nearly the same proportion, abandon every other assistance. If they reject Christ and deny his eternal life, they are tempted by the logic of their argument to deny duty in its solemn significance and its lasting consequences, — to defy or ignore conscience in its smiles and wrathful condemnation. If they part with Christ as at once the real and the ideal of human perfection, and the inspirer of the highest activities in the battle of life, the contest of living without Christ, which will force itself upon every man, must be either sensual or selfish on the one hand, or aimless and hopeless on the other. Men without faith must either disown the seriousness of life, and turn it into a shallow comedy or a mimic tragedy; or, accepting life in its seriousness, make it an unsolved and cruel mystery; or take the shallow creed of the materialist of a brief and uncertain bodily existence with blank agnosticism respecting any other inheritance with its aspirations and hopes. Whatever may be true of philosophers and *dilettanti*, practical and earnest men will not be satisfied with these interpretations and conceptions of their destiny and their capacity. They will, sooner or later, decide that they will not, because they cannot, fight the battle of life without faith, — they will, because they must, come back to the only faith which will give them an assured and satisfactory victory.

8. The contest of faith is a good contest.



First of all, it is a successful contest. If continued to the end, it cannot but terminate in victory. There can be no defeat, no failure, and no final disappointment. The great result is secured for which life on earth is appointed; and every incident and act, every sacrifice and service, every suffering and labor, all contribute to its completeness. Not only is the supreme aim made sure, but it is possible that every single act and sacrifice, every labor and relaxation, every friend and enemy, every chance acquaintance, and every life-long friendship should each and all appear in the final accumulation of good that is harvested at the end of the contest. It is the peculiar glory of the Christian strife, that evil suffered and defeat encountered count as much, and sometimes more, than good acquired and victory achieved. When the battle of life is fought aright, there should be no waste and loss of the opportunities of living while there is the saving the soul. There need not be. There is no difficult and scant admission into the eternal kingdom, on the condition that the habits and mistakes, the temper and the aims, the gains of wealth and honor, should all be abandoned as worse than useless lumber, or condemned as hay, wood, and stubble in the trying ordeal of God's fiery scrutiny. On the other hand, the total of the active conflicts and patient endurances, of the struggles with fortune and with one's self, with bad influences and bad men, — the whole of it may be gathered in and housed as the accepted harvest at the end.

Next, the contest of faith is a good contest, because it is progressive. Each preceding victory gives the promise and the assurance of the next. All the strength accumulated in the past, whether by act or suffering, is carried forward to the uses of each conflict that follows. From progress comes courage. "Courage," says Emerson, "consists in having done the thing before;" and

courage in the Christian's conflicts with evil, eminently grows by the experiences of previous success. The Christian contest is eminently attractive, because it unites the distrust of self with an implicit and loyal allegiance to its master. While it is bold, and in a sense self-reliant, it is in proportion reverent and humble; while it fears nothing but infidelity and dishonor, it enlarges its conception of both by recognizing Christ as its leader, and conscience as its rule. The Christian humility has no strain of weakness or affectation. It simply asserts the honest self-estimate which attends the comparison of one's self with the highest standard, and that complete knowledge of one's defects which attends the direct inspection of the inner life. In such an honest judgment there can be neither weakness nor meanness, but the conscious and modest dignity which attends homage to the truth. But what is best of all, in this contest of faith, is the confirmed assurance of acceptance with God, which is marked by the man who has oftenest gone, with trusting faith, to his feet. When this consummate and comprehensive act is confirmed as the inner habit of the man and the controlling spring of his life, the peace of God which passeth understanding will testify that the life and strife of faith are only good. Out of this peace there springs up the hope which is full of immortality. This explains why the apostle, in bidding his readers to fight the good fight of faith, bids them also, as a necessary incident and consequent, to lay hold on eternal life. It was because the one is connected with the other by a necessary and inner bond of spiritual relationship. It is because the man who fights the good fight of faith, so far anticipates the life which is immortal. The temper of earthly service is, in its nature, a spirit of heavenly triumph. The man who is bold and constant and self-forgetting in the contests of

Christian warfare, shows himself, thereby, to be fitted for the peace and the perfection of the heavenly state. This truth reconciles free forgiveness and unquestioned pardon, with a more devoted consecration to abundant labors in the service of the master. It meets the prayer of the publican and the last appeal of the dying thief with instant and gratuitous pardon; and, at the same time, stimulates the patient laborer to a long and laborious Christian life, by the hope of a rich reward. It meets us at the beginning of life, and at every crisis of our lives, with the hope of a rich and permanent harvest of spiritual good from every contest of either trial or suffering. While it constantly removes our despondency and fear by the fullest offer of pardon, it stimulates us never to be weary in well-doing, by the assurance that thereby an open and abundant entrance shall be ministered to us in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is no secret to any of us that the relation of the eternal to the present life has, of late, been the subject of free, and perhaps not always of reverent, speculation. Some evil may come from the flippant way in which the theme has been handled by some critics and theologians. But it is possible that from all this great good shall follow.

That man will continue to think of the future life in every conceivable light, and in every possible attitude of thought and feeling, may easily be imagined; but the solemn majesty of the eternal life, which broods over the present brief existence, can never be abated by the blasphemy of the profane or the jesting of the scorner. The solemn yet sacred shadow which its presence will continue to cast over the activities and scenes of the earthly life, will never cease to be recognized by thinking men. That shadow, instead of being less, will

become more solemn as its mysteries are interpreted in a more enlightened spirit. If the discussion of the revelations of nature and of Christ concerning it, shall bring that life more frequently and closely to the thoughts of men, so as to enlarge and elevate their conceptions of what it is, and how nearly related the present is to the future, it cannot but infuse new energy and elevation into the life that we are all of us living, and baptize this life as with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Could the men of the present generation, and especially the young men in their ardor and hope, be made to feel that by the life which they are living here they are hourly and daily laying hold of the eternal life which they are to live hereafter, and that a life without God here, with all its fascinations, is essentially a life without God hereafter in darkness and loneliness, in alienation and comfortlessness, it would put new energy into every Christian purpose, and invest the sacrifices and self-denials of the fight of faith with a dignity and glory that would shine in the face of every combatant. The powers of the world to come, in other days, proved a force of enormous energy, when this immortal life was made a near and living fact, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. In those days the believing Church, under the new inspiration, lived its earthly life in thankful triumph, and went to its martyrdom with songs of blessed anticipation, — literally laying hold on eternal life with faith and joy. There are many reasons, at the present time, why its inspiring glories should take a stronger hold than ever of the hearts of men, and more completely sway their energies. The Christian life is now better understood than ever before, in its spirituality, in its unselfishness, in its innocent pleasures, conjoined with its uncompromising unworldiness, in its catholic charity, added to its sacrificing heroism, and,

above all, in the intimate connection which exists between the sources of earthly and heavenly joy. We are no strangers now in any part of the physical universe. Science makes us feel at home in every planet, and explore the recesses of the sun and the substance of the stars. It essays to trace the history of the gathering and the growth of the solar, if not of the stellar, universe; and to follow with minutest detail the history of all living beings. The future of man's earthly history, in its art and civilization and science, is anticipated with more or less definiteness and assurance. And why not the future moral and spiritual experiences of the human soul in another state, if by patient continuance in well-doing it is made ready for glory and honor and immortality, or if by disobedience to the truth, it has thereby judged itself unworthy of eternal life. While we cannot doubt that the redeeming pity will save to the uttermost every soul that lays hold on eternal life with the slenderest grasp of a loving and obedient faith, we can also believe that he who anticipates its holy self-denial and its spiritual joys with the completest sympathy, shall lay hold of its gathered treasures with the firmest grasp, and be greeted with the emphatic welcome, "Thou hast been faithful over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Such are the clearest and most explicit teachings of the New Testament; and in the apparent paradoxes which they seem to some to involve, are contained the most decisive proof that its free and generous forgiveness is the inspiration and incitement to an earnest strife with evil, and the pledge of final victory.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class*.—The occasion lends eloquence and force to the words which I have selected as my theme. You can be no strangers

now to the truth that life is a contest. Some of you may have sought to hide this fact from your thoughts for a while, or to defer the full realization of its import; but it has come upon you at last, in the trials of these parting days, and in the slow but certain anticipations of dawning manhood. Under these circumstances, we have invited you to this place of your daily worship to listen to the words of exhortation and encouragement, that you may make the contest of life a contest of faith; and by so doing, make it a contest of hope and victory. We charge you to dismiss the impression, once for all, that faith is less needful now than in former days for the advancement of the race in knowledge and culture and morality. So far as its attainments are genuine and permanent, they are the flowers and fruit of the heroic faith of other times. This fair civilization in which we rejoice, these quiet homes, the palaces of industry and science and letters, this established law, this peaceful security, these softened manners, this free government, this elevated and controlling public sentiment, have been wrought for us by the fires of martyrdom, the shock of the battle-field, and the patient labor of many a hero of faith, whose name for man is perhaps written in water, but shines in the book of God's memory in characters glowing with light. There are men who call themselves students of history, who would have us believe that the continuance of these blessings is assured without the continuance of the faith which produced them; that Christian civilization will remain and flourish as firmly and as beautifully without faith as with it; and that a community of millions of men shall be as strong and as fair without faith in the living God as with it, or with a so-called faith that makes confessed ignorance the test of its piety, and negation the glory of its creed.

It is equally true that for individual welfare faith is equally necessary. Culture can do much for man; especially when it applies the lessons which Christian unselfishness and refinement have required generations to mature and master. Culture, when it abjures faith and denies Christ, may make a fair show of personal purity and honor, of self-respect and public spirit, of chivalric and courteous manners, and of high moral aims. Literature and art, also, may be animated, to a large extent, by a healthful moral energy, and inspire their devotees to noble sentiments, to philanthropic sacrifices, to refined courtesy and a self-denying life. But the individual soul still requires a life-giving energy, such as culture and letters can never impart, for the conscience in the crisis of its inner and outer life, for the temptations that now and then shake a man's integrity to the centre; under the awful strokes of overwhelming calamity, for the solemn hour of approaching death, and along the solitary pathway which conducts the lonely spirit to the presence of the living God. For all these exigencies of our human life, faith is as much needed now as ever; and there are reasons why, to the thoughtful man, it would seem to be more needful now than ever before.

Dismiss, too, the conceited or cowardly thought that the contest of faith is more difficult at present than in earlier days, especially for educated men. Faith has always involved a battle, and it always will; and for that matter, so has unbelief. The question is not, and never has been, which will you reject, because it is free from difficulties, but which will you believe, as between the more and the fewer,—the greater and the less. Remember always that the difficulties of denial must be assumed by the man who is overcome by the difficulties of faith. Atheistic science overwhelms the imagination

with the mystery and the uselessness of a self-existent Creator; and thinks it quite enough to have a non-theistic faith with the greatness of its mystery. But atheistic science forgets that the reason finds greater difficulty in accepting a self-existent universe, in which there are intelligent spirits, without a supreme intelligence to give it order, or will to give it force, or love to fill it with blessings. It may be that science and philosophy have, in these times, started new questions and raised new objections; but whatever difficulties they have made for faith, they have made manifold more for unbelief. Criticism finds new problems in its enlarged knowledge of ancient history and life; and now and then reverses a traditionary opinion, which had been held sacred for ages. But every flash of its torch which serves to deepen some minor shadow in the recovered past, casts a more brilliant light upon the central object of the Christian's faith and hope. If the creed of the Christian Church is less confident in respect to many points once esteemed essential to faith, it is more assured, more united, and more fervent in respect to those commanding truths in which the Christian lives and loves and labors and dies. It is not scientific demonstrations, nor miracles, nor a voice from heaven, which are needed now, so much as manhood and self-sacrifice, the aggressive and fervid spirit, and, above all, the Christ-like consecration which befit the simpler and stronger views of Christian truth, the more catholic conceptions of the kingdom of God, and the more enlightened views of the Christian life, which are the joy and honor of our times.

Remember, too, that as you make this faith your own, you lay hold of eternal life. Of that life we know but little in its details, for we cannot anticipate many of its experiences. It is enough that we know that it is near



enough to permit us, by the activities of our daily life, to scatter those earthly seeds in a heavenly soil, the product of which shall bloom with flowers and glow with fruit that shall be immortal.

How near that life may be to any one of you, you know not; but you cannot doubt that it possibly may be near, since the experience of that bright Saturday in October last, so bright and sunny as to seem to exclude all thought of sadness and death, when one of the gayest of your company exchanged one life for another, as it were, in a moment. I shall not soon forget the experiences of that day, nor its lessons concerning the nearness of the earthly to the immortal life. I would fain believe that this event has brought the eternal life nearer to the minds of many of you, and elevated your aims and hopes with respect to the hopes and activities and aims of the present life. If the year that is now closing has been to many a year of moral thoughtfulness and earnest reflection and spiritual resolve, it has been no less a year of conscious progress, of cheerful activity, and of manly enjoyment. You are so happy as to be assured that your college-life has been a life of more than usual success and satisfaction; and your prospects are more than usually flattering for a career of usefulness and honor. What more can I wish for you, than that each of you may "fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life." With these words I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## XVI.

### *IN UNDERSTANDING BE MEN.\**

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."—*1 Thess. v. 21.*

"AND TO VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE."—*2 Pet. i. 5.*

"BUT IN UNDERSTANDING BE MEN."—*1 Cor. xiv. 20.*

THESE words may seem to be commonplace,—so often used as to be entirely outworn; and in losing their freshness, to have lost their meaning. There are reasons, however, why they may be taken as especially appropriate to the age in which we are living. This age may be properly called as above all others the critical age,—the age of criticism by eminence,—an age in which men literally attempt to prove or test all things, more persistently and variously than ever before. The time-spirit, as it is now familiarly called, is pre-eminently a spirit of questioning analysis, such as the world has hitherto never seen. Every thing that man knows or fancies, that he believes or denies, is now brought to the bar of critical reason, and summoned to give an account of itself, that it may establish or renounce its claims. Systems of faith and systems of philosophy, theories of government and theories of revenue, the laws of fashion and the laws of trade, the creeds of religion and the creeds of atheism, dogmatic assertions and agnostic denials, even theories of literature, poetry, diet, exercise, and fashion, are all distinctly challenged, as they pass in

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slow or rapid review before the eye of criticism, and are tried and tested by its more or less competent tribunals. Men, in other times, were content to enjoy. In these times they cannot enjoy, unless they also understand. They are not satisfied to eat, even if they become healthy and strong, unless they have mastered the processes of digestion, and can trace the several elements of nutriment, and the subtle processes of animal life. They cannot enjoy the raptures into which music lifts up the soul, until they have mastered the theories of harmony, or the special philosophy of the composer. They cannot pray without a complete philosophy of prayer. They can neither believe in man nor in God without a series of critical questionings, which begin with denying both, and which often end with only a half belief in either. They cannot believe in knowledge itself without first challenging the authority and trustworthiness of their own power to know, and ending in doubt whether they more than half know any thing. We, at this time, are concerned with the relations of this spirit to the religious life, and with its appropriate remedy. In other words, we ask how we can, and why we should, prove all things, and hold fast whatever is good. In order to answer this question satisfactorily, we need to scrutinize the critical spirit itself.

We notice, first, that it is, in part, the legitimate outgrowth of the scientific spirit which is the glory of our times. Science is nothing if it is not critical. When it defines, it sharply distinguishes; and it cannot distinguish unless it sharply observes. When it reasons, it must scrutinize evidence. When it arranges and builds a system, it must adjust every fact or truth to its fellow with the most scrupulous severity. It must look every thing squarely in the face. To do this with continuity and success requires the concentration of the

attention, either upon a limited number of facts, or a limited number of relations. It is all the same whether the scientist studies a drop of water with its animalculæ, or the universe of the kosmos as to its celestial mechanics. In either case, he limits his attention to a few subject-matters. Hence every special science expands itself into the work of a lifetime, and occupies the microscopic, because it is the concentrated attention of the devotee who is determined to master it, whether it be the natural history of a family of plants or insects, or the geology of the prehistoric periods, or the science of politics or morals or religion, — whether it be the philosophy of matter or spirit, or the relations or dependencies of each. Any one of these departments may suffice for a lifetime, and occupy the days and nights of the sharpest observer and the closest thinker. Within each one of these separate spheres each man is intellectually at home, and often is at home nowhere else. Beyond this sphere he finds little interest, and professes to but few clear and well-reasoned convictions. Within his specialty he is confident and strong, walking in the light of accepted and luminous truth, and walking with an assured and fearless step. In respect to what is beyond, he may be positive and dogmatic, or timid and modest. If he has the true scientific spirit, he will defer to the opinions of his neighbors in respect to questions which lie within their province. The geologist will not presume to meddle with the historian, nor the chemist with the literary critic. Even the most many-sided men, the broadest and most varied thinkers, best know the specialties in which they are strong, and know as well that beyond these they are relatively weak. It follows that if a man is presuming and positive, he will measure and judge of every kind of truth by the measures and methods of which he is master. He will criticise every kind of truth

by the standards of his own specialty. On the other hand, the wiser and more modest, while they know they are strong within their own lines, also know that beyond they are weak. They exemplify the fairest and most attractive phase of the true scientific spirit, — assured confidence and strong convictions within certain limits, and modest deference to the judgment of others beyond. There is, however, one great domain beyond any line of these separate fields of scientific truth; common to all men, including them all, having relations to all men, the presence or possibility of which all acknowledge, if they will but think. We refer to the domain of faith. Into what attitude does the critical and scientific spirit bring its devotee with respect to the unseen and the mortal, — with respect to God and duty and eternal life? We raise no question here as to the compatibility of trusting faith with critical science. All that we assert is, that if its truths are not tried and tested by the scientific mind, after it has been sharpened by the analysis of logic, and schooled by the evidence of fact, there is serious danger that they will be left in the limbo of the unscientific prejudices of childhood, with the intellectual trumpery of an unscientific age, and the traditions of unscientific thought. Here lies the chief danger from the scientific side of our critical age.

2. In literature the critical spirit assumes another form. Whereas in science it is courteous and modest, and sometimes narrow, in literature it assumes to be positive, all-judging, and all-knowing. Its characteristic aim is to seem to know every thing in respect to every question, and to express what it knows in forms so brilliant and imposing, that no man shall have the presumption to question its authority. The enormous number and unquestioned ability of reviews and journals of every sort, afford the amplest opportunity for the

quick eye, the rapid generalization, the dogmatic boldness, and the imposing diction in which literature delights, and which its leaders of the present day so much affect. Next to this quality of our literature, we notice the number of cultivated persons for whom it furnishes the bulk of their reading, and who derive from it the most of their knowledge and their opinions. Of this potent instrumentality, the time-spirit has taken almost complete possession, as it summons to judgment all opinions and theories and creeds, all philosophies and fashions, by the medium of its dashing leader or its elaborate review. No subject in earth or heaven is too lofty for its aspirations; no logic too trivial for its notice. The names of a few prominent writers living and dead, in England and America, will occur to you who are fair representatives of critical writers who have been esteemed oracles of wisdom in their time, especially to the young, and from whom so many in the last two generations have indirectly and directly derived their principles, in respect to the most important of all questions. As in other times, so in our times, literary critics have exerted a potent influence upon the attitude of their generation with respect to the Christian faith. To their honor be it said, that in our time they have, to a large extent, inculcated reverence and respect for the Christian ideal of life, and for the Christian history as best symbolizing this ideal. But when they encounter the supernatural and historical truth of the New-Testament record, they too often either directly deny its reality, or indirectly assume that it is slowly disintegrated by the searching truth of modern criticism, or has been already outgrown by the mysterious time-spirit. It would also seem that as fast as there goes out of modern literature the personal reverence for the historic Christ, there goes with it a practical and fervent recognition of the living

God as the father of men, who pities their prayers, and receives them at last to his loving embrace in the heavenly home, — not because this truth itself, could it be true, were not most precious and ennobling, but because in the keen atmosphere of the arrogant time-spirit it is congealed into a blinding mist. Not that the glory of the supernatural Christ does not still remain for men as the truest and most touching symbol of what man needs and longs for, but that the news of it is regarded as too good to be true; and hence it is evaporated into a myth by our self-indulgent epicureanism, or rejected as a lie by the malignant pessimism of a generation of professional critics, who have never learned what life and man are by doing and suffering with their kind. Such are the aspects of this critical age, — an age that seeks to prove all things by the tests of science or of culture. I have dwelt upon both these phases for a moment, in order to introduce my theme, which is the special obligation which rests upon men of education to prove and test their Christian faith in the light of intellectual conviction. That this is his duty, is evident from the following consideration: —

1. The nature of faith implies this duty. Faith, whatever else it may be or imply, involves definite and strong conviction. Conviction requires evidence. Evidence is the objective truth which compels assent. Subjectively and spiritually, faith in a Fiji Islander may be the same as it is in a cultivated and reflecting man, but intellectually it cannot be the same. Whatever the truth may be, or in whatever form it may meet the mind, — whether by an argument, or a person, or a dream, or a fantasy, — it must convince the intellect that something is true. It may come through a person by a look or a word, as when the risen Lord spoke to Mary, and she answered, "My Master;" or

looked upon Peter, and Peter wept bitterly; or confronted Saul on the way to Damascus; or appeared to Stephen at his martyrdom. It may be by memory, as when a reprobate youth thinks of his mother at home on a Sunday morning, when half around the globe, and believes with repentant tears; or by sheer logic, as when a hard-hearted Sadducee yields to an often-studied argument that becomes suddenly luminous with convincing power. It may involve special spiritualistic influences, as when the man rises into a softened and believing mood, he knows not why or how, and his thoughts bring tears to his eyes: and yet in every one of these cases there is intellectual consent to the truth, and for good reasons. Now the thinking man, just so far as he thinks at all, knows the reasons of his convictions. He is trained to analyze his thoughts and to justify them. It makes no difference with what his thoughts are occupied; just so far as he is educated, he is trained to know what he believes, and why he believes it; and to state it more or less distinctly to himself and to others. If there is any class of his activities of which this is not true, it halts and becomes a drag upon the rest. Let him be ever so acute a geometer, if he fails to analyze an argument in political science, his intelligence so far fails him. This is pre-eminently true if a man's religious convictions are not abreast with his reflective thinking upon other subjects. If he rarely asks himself why he believes in God or in Christ, or whether he believes at all; or more important still, if he rarely inquires with intelligence what the Christian life involves in spirit or conduct; if his mind is blankly inane upon points like these, he is so far doomed to be a dwarf or a sluggard in the kingdom of God; and so much the worse, the more of a giant or a prince he is in the other activities of his being. Whatever his reason for his neglect may be, even if that



reason takes the form of a pious theory, it brings weakness into his character, and inconsistency into his life.

2. The scholar must deny as well as believe; and he cannot deny intelligently without distinctly giving his reasons to himself. Conviction, in this critical age, is negative as truly as it is positive. The thinking man must say no, as positively as he says yes, and nearly as often; and he can do neither without understanding what he rejects as truly as that which he accepts. Even if he is disinclined to say no to any body or any thing, he cannot avoid thinking no whenever he meets a man of another faith than his own, or a man of no faith at all. The sight of such a one, of itself awakens the question, "Why do I deny what he believes? How can he believe what I reject as absurd or irrational, or at best as a half truth, or an exaggerated truth, or a plausible error." No educated man in these days, no thinking man who cares enough about his religion to attain the thinnest semblance of faith, can avoid these suggestions. Why, in the very villages where two generations ago every man, woman, and child was contented with the traditional orthodoxy, we find in these days almost every variety of belief and no belief. We need not go to India to find Buddhists or Brahmins. They are not unknown in our New-England villages among their half-dozen varieties of Christian believers, with a plenty of materialists, agnostics, and pessimists thrown in. Indeed, our age has proved itself so fertile in breeding varieties, as almost to have run itself out; and a tendency to re-action has set in, in the form of a mystical indefiniteness of a faith in the philosophy of religion in general, with no creed in particular.

But with all this force of re-action towards faith, every influence tends to bring the thoughts and theories of all sorts of men to the knowledge of those who read

and think; and the question will constantly spring up, Why do I say no to what I reject? And that question must be answered with some thought or intelligence. It is of no use to talk here of toleration and charity. Both these duties have their place; and it is a large and important place: but that place does not in the least relieve the reflecting believer from the duty of positive dissent, and of doing this with a more or less distinct statement of his reasons. Emphatically is this true of the Christian scholar.

3. A critical age tests and exposes those statements and reasonings which are weak and less important. Instructed and disciplined intelligence discriminates between Christian truths of primary and secondary importance,—truths which address the intellect as the believing, rather than the abstracting and defining, faculty,—truths which, so to speak, are appropriate to the great temple of imagination where all thinking men can meet in common, as contrasted with those truths which are remanded to closet or private chapel where a special dialect is used, and initiated disciples alone feel at home. I imagine myself arrested here by the objection that the logic already urged, requires every intelligent believer to be a formal and finished theologian; whereas nothing seems at times less fitted to satisfy and confirm the faith of many intelligent scholars, than the technical terms and formal argument of catechisms and theological systems. I reply that the terms and the reasoning which are required by a theologian are by no means essential to a rational Christian faith. Modern science and modern criticism have rendered an important service, in bringing theology into living relations to modern thought and scientific and current speech. In this they have shown themselves to be by no means wholly children of darkness; but have rendered noble service

to Christian truth as angels of light. Not only have they brought Christian philosophy into living relations with the philosopher's thought and speech of the times, but they have helped men to distinguish between those great truths which are essential to an earnest Christian life, and those which are of minor practical importance. We are content to notice that such a difference exists, without undertaking to draw the line between the one class and the other. On the one side of this line are those grand and distinctive truths, or, rather, those living powers, which are no sooner thought of than they fill and expand the mind with some worthy conception of its own greatness; or, rather, overwhelm and confound it by the contrast of its own littleness. Let us give a moment to some of these truths, divested of all time-worn associations; as, for example, to God, the self-existent, all-knowing, all-present, creating, and yet none the less working after a plan from the beginning, as science and history both declare. After this plan, more and more complex forms of matter emerge into being, within whose mysterious and befitting frames life appears, putting on more and more wondrous adaptations and richer experiences in the beginnings of animal life, with fuller and still fuller germs of intelligence, with more and more touching anticipations of human affection and sympathy, till man appears, "made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor." Is there such a being thus related to the universe of matter and spirit? and can man know him and love him and trust in him? or is he utterly unknowable, smiting back into our very teeth the words of uplifted praise which we essay to utter, repelling by a stony stare the fervent love which goes up to heaven from our hearts like the breath of the morning? Is this wonderful being a person? Does he rejoice in the supreme and finished glory

of a conscious intelligence and conscious life, which qualifies him to seek and find delight in sympathy with beings made in his image? or is he that pale abstraction, called the absolute by modern critics, — the blanched and faded *residuum* of man's utmost effort to put as far as possible from his thoughts any living and concrete reality that is higher than himself. In other words, is there a living God? and does faith in him justify itself not only to our personal needs, and what some call our sentimental longings, but to our soberest and most critical analysis? Surely he is a person if he is a spirit; and he also seeketh those who will worship him in spirit and in truth. But has he given proof of this? Yes; the highest and the best possible, by limiting himself to our human capacities that he might commend his fatherly love and his pardoning goodness to men, who, if they need any thing, need pardon and help, and the convincing and touching assurance of both. Does man need that God should thus come to him, and condescend to him? or is he complete without him? Does culture furnish an adequate religion? or does man cry out for the living God? Is it enough that I strive to make myself better, or strive to be my own redeemer? or must I cast myself upon the help and mercy of One who is stronger and purer than myself, who stoops and reaches out his hand to save me?

Is life worth living? or is it a wearisome tale or an empty farce that now and then becomes a horrible tragedy? When I die, will that be the end of me? Do I give myself up with a shudder to dust and forgetfulness, or turn my death song into an imaginative harangue over my survival in the thoughts and purposes of succeeding generations? Or do I, with loyal and grateful trust and with triumphant peace, say, "Whether I live, I live unto the Lord: whether I die, I die unto

the Lord: living or dying I am the Lord's"? Truths and theories like these are the truths that wake to perish never in the thoughtful soul. With them he cannot but wrestle as a strong man for his life, that he may know in whom and what he may trust. They are fitted to rouse and invigorate the critical thinker to the utmost. Out of their intellectual and emotional life they have fed and stimulated the greatest of men to their highest and best. Every educated man who has not yet settled with himself whether they are truths, in the light of disciplined reflection, has not begun even to think. Connected with these questionings, there are others of far inferior interest; important indeed, because knowledge of every kind is important, but not vital to our faith. These inquiries have divided Christian thinkers from the earliest times. They relate to the literature of the Scriptures, — the minutiae of their interpretation, the extent of their inspiration, the reach of their authority, the formulation of one's faith in the creeds of theology, and scores of other matters confessedly of inferior importance. If any or all of these are made of the first importance by thousands, and even by tens of thousands, they are not so regarded by multitudes of other believers, as thoughtful, as cultivated, and as Christian as they. We think it of vital importance to the progress of the kingdom of God, that the intelligent defenders of Christian truth should distinguish between these vital and fundamental truths and those of inferior importance. It is upon the strong redoubts that the chief interest of any contest must centre; and it is upon their defence or capture that the issue must depend. We know that many able and earnest defenders of the common cause seem to think that the outworks are as important as the citadel. They have little sympathy, and sometimes less charity, for those who will surrender a

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single position because they believe it untenable or not worth fighting for. It must also be frankly confessed that the new lights of criticism in literature, history, science, and philosophy have kindled a bright and broad noonday in respect to many questions which were not dreamed of by the men of other generations. Into the light of that noonday the great principles and facts of the Christian scheme must surely come in these days of fiery and unsparing criticism. The true defenders of the Christian faith at such times—the men who would be martyrs if martyrs were called for—are the men who are willing to cast the principles of their faith into the fires of scientific criticism; and are content if their wood, hay, and stubble shall be utterly consumed therein. They are true defenders of the faith because they do not love Christianity better than the truth, but love Christianity because they have proved it to be true, and, moreover, because they can distinguish that which is transient from that which survives in all time. If Christianity is to stand in this generation, it must stand by the efforts of this class of expounders and defenders; and it is the educated men of this generation who must exercise themselves to a faith that is strong, because it is discriminating and intelligent, and is, therefore, catholic and tolerant.

4. Reflective intelligence adds enormously to individual usefulness. We contend that questions of duty, as truly as questions of faith, require the light which comes from earnest and intelligent reflection. It is always a real mistake, and sometimes a dangerous mistake, to suppose that the conscience, which is to the soul what the eye is to the body, is never darkened or burdened, even when it gropes or strains after the light. The great Teacher has surely taught us better than this in the words, "If the light that is in thee be darkness,

how great is that darkness?" To contend or conclude that only an honest mind is wanted to make the life consistent, transparent, and beautiful in the eyes of all who look on, has scant enough semblance of truth to hide and recommend an enormous error. The believing spirit may, indeed, be inspired of God to a child's simplicity; but the occasions are constant in which there is a call and need that in understanding we should be men. The weak-minded but honest-hearted servant of duty is constantly making practical blunders by ill-timed words and mistaken conduct. Nothing but respect for his honesty preserves him from oftentimes being laughed at for his weak or wrong-headed error. It is also a mistake to suppose that what is called an average understanding is all that is needed for the conduct of life in critical hours. The man who gives thought to the question, "What shall I believe?" cannot but ask at times, with equal earnestness, "What shall I do?" The earnest actions that are fired by zeal and controlled by thought have the temper in them of enlightened convictions, and cut their way like steel. The fervor that flows from the slowly kindled coals of inward reflection is like the touch of a seraph sent from the presence and altar of God, which inspires words of duty with a prophet's power. On the other hand, zeal for duty that is guided and energized by no solid and well-reasoned convictions, is the wildfire of windy enthusiasm, which burns itself out for want of fuel; or the sulphurous flames of the malignant fanatic, who ends by cursing and denouncing those whom he hoped to bless and save. Ten thousand times has it been proved that unenlightened moral earnestness has brought the very name of conscience and duty into public mockery, and made them a stench in the nostrils of the sober-minded. It would seem to be weakness to hold that duty can be

severed from the intellectual guidance of the practical affairs of life. It is next to madness to entertain the idea that duty can furnish its own inspiration at a time when the results of conduct are scrutinized by a thousand critical eyes, and the mistakes of good men are blazoned in scores of newspapers.

5. What is true of private society, is true of social movements. They all cry out for intelligence as the condition of success. The world was never so wakeful as at present to social combinations for human welfare. The cause of political and administrative reform, of public education in every plane, of temperance by political and moral instrumentality, of missionary and evangelistic efforts, of the arrest and prevention of pauperism, poverty, and crime, or, comprehensively, of the elevation of society and of man by social agencies, never received so much attention as at present. If the first flush of zeal and hope in respect to some of these interests has abated, and given way to the depressing conclusion that social regeneration must be long delayed, the assurance has but deepened in many minds, that were society but half awakened to what it could do and might hope for, a glorious day would soon be seen to come up in the sky. With these hopes the conviction is more and more established, that every social movement that is founded on false or defective principles will, sooner or later, be completely wrecked, or suffer some desperate re-action. Now and then some tidal-wave of reform sweeps over the land, — as temperance legislation, or popular education, or evangelism, or some radical notion about the currency or property in land, — and the half truths that are paraded on the banners or shouted in the rallying cries seem to shake the entire community. So far as such a movement represents a principle that is sound and true, it is irresistible.



A true principle once well set in motion is omnipotent. The men and the community which oppose are to it as is the target which stands in the line of the cannon shot. They simply convert it into a ball of fire which burns and shatters whatever it strikes. But so far as such a movement represents only half a truth, the error neutralizes the truth; and it repels as often as it constrains or wins, or is itself ground into powder by the re-action which it provokes. There are those who say, The cause is good, on the whole: why not join with it? You will do more good than harm. We cannot stay to make it perfect: the people are impatient, and this is no time to think,—only to act. There are times when it is safe to respond to such an appeal; and the end is so great and good, and the means so wise and so direct, that to stand aloof or to criticise is almost an act of treason to one's kind. But it is not so when the movement is, in its essence, a movement of theory or thought; when it concerns a principle of wise social action; when intelligence and practical wisdom are its very essence and strength. Then is the opportunity and duty of thinking men. Then is the time in which they are called to the front. Unless they respond to the call, and use the judgment which the occasion requires, the good cause, however good it may be, may waste itself in the flats of a shallow enthusiasm, or fling itself headlong into a yawning chasm of malignant fanaticism. That this has been proved to be true, is clear to those who are familiar with the history of past movements, or who observe with discrimination the tendencies of the present. The great anti-slavery movement which is so nearly finished; the temperance reform which is the vexation of politicians and the problem of statesmen; the social demand for popular education and the culture of the masses; the discussions concerning pauperism in

its causes and cure; prison discipline with all which it involves; public amusements and social adjustments; the morals and politics of capital and labor; and, above all, evangelism and Christian missions, with their ramified operations and varified calls for personal and pecuniary sacrifices, — all these would suggest what I need not say, — that the waste of zeal and lack of judgment and, oftentimes, the defiance and contempt of judgment which they display have been the scandal and reproach of every one of these good causes, and brought every one of them into more or less discredit. A conspicuous hero in one of the greatest of these movements was buried a few months ago, — splendid by his rhetorical gifts and unequalled in some of the equipments which make men leaders of their kind; but who, in the extremity of his one-sided partisanship, seemed never so happy as when he used his silver tongue in the utterance of paradoxes that were most offensive to that common sense and common morality by which social order stands. That his fellow-men should honor him for his personal worth, and praise him for his courage, was natural; but it is a significant proof of the lack and need of discriminating judgment, that there has been so little manly criticism of the grievous errors of his social paradoxes; as if, forsooth, the brilliancy of the fireworks which he manipulated so effectively could allow us to forget that they were loaded with deadly missiles, and that the magician who directed them, whether he knew it or not, was scattering “fire-brands, arrows, and death.” I refer to this case as an example of the tendency among the educated men of our country to indiscriminate partisanship either for or against the cause with which they are identified, especially if the cause proposes moral or religious ends. If another example were needed, it might be found in the temper-

ance reform which for some fifty years has occupied public attention, and is doubtless most important to our social welfare. This reform has been characterized by a series of what are called great tidal movements, — each one of which has been supposed to carry public sentiment upwards and onwards to a higher level. Possibly this may be true ; but it cannot be denied that each advance has carried forward not a little of dirt and refuse and foam and fury which had better have been spared, which each reflux has left behind in enormous masses. At this moment the question of prohibition and license and the possibility of settling this question on principles that will take it out of the hands of ethical abstractionists on the one side and those who call themselves practical politicians on the other, is one of the pressing and almost hopeless questions of the hour.

The advancing movements of the Church repeat the same history, and enforce similar lessons. While nothing can be more blessed, and nothing more hopeful, than the increase of Christian enterprise and the multiform expansion of evangelism ; while it is equally clear that this expansion must and will be increased a thousand-fold without exhausting the resources of the Christian Church ; it is equally obvious that with this increase of zeal and activity there must be a commensurate increase of wisdom and good sense, if we would save ourselves from thousands of failures. The sacramental host of God's elect, like every other community of living men, is liable to manifold weaknesses and errors ; and it is certainly followed, like every other army, by many irregular combatants. Its solid battalions, its glittering squadrons, its ponderous artilleries, and its brilliant officers are attended by a motley crowd of partisans, who are often as jealous as they are zealous, and are as

ignorant as they are confident that they are the strength and hope of the cause. If you ask them for the reason of the faith that is in them, they will tell you that faith is above reason, and owes no allegiance to reason. If you appeal to common sense and common prudence, they appeal to their personal inspiration and to God. There is nothing strange or new in all this. It has been true from the beginning that "in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth." But it is none the less true that the more sacred the cause, and the more solemn and inspiring the motives which move mankind, the more imperative the necessity that the cause should be guided by intelligence, if it is to be crowned with success. To use disciplined intelligence in these highest of all services, is the especial duty and the high privilege of educated men. For to have been educated signifies nothing, unless it means that you have been trained to think before you act, and to give reasons for your actions, — especially when you act in great public movements; and, most of all, when these movements connect you closely with the advancing kingdom of God. While I would inspire in each of you, as the highest of all ambitions, to be efficient and trusted leaders of your fellow-men in every social movement that brings them nearer to God, I would urge with equal earnestness, that you can only do so with success, as you have clear and scientific convictions which have been formed in the light of trained intelligence.

Finally, such intelligence thus applied is essential to give dignity and strength to the individual character, and energy and symmetry to the personal life. What we are, and the life which we live are more than every thing besides. The manhood after which we aspire, the manhood which we achieve, not the place which we

hold, or the gains which we acquire, are the great objects for which to live. For success in this aim there is no rule but the rule of reflective intelligence. Zeal and self-denial by themselves are not the only equipment for the man who professes to form his own principles and to direct those of others by the light of intelligent faith. It is true the controlling spirit and aim is the chief condition of success. If an educated man is avowedly and consciously selfish in his theory of life, if he distinctly avows and consistently practises the doctrine of "every man for himself," he is doubly cursed; for he turns his back on his nobler impulses and on the eternal law of love, and treads under his feet the example of the Lord who consecrated for all the ages the spirit of self-sacrifice by his own death on the cross. But it is not enough that a man is moved by the holiest and the most unselfish aspirations. He must know what he believes, and why he believes it. He must know what he rejects, and why he rejects it. He must distinguish the essential and practical truth, which is open to all men who think, from the less essential and scholastic and technical and partisan truth which is limited to the few. He must be able wisely to lead his fellow-men in the great social movements which tend to human progress and human salvation. To the student pre-eminently all these are the conditions of a symmetrical character and a successful life.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class*,—That you may aspire after such a character, and attend to such a life, we have invited you to the services of this hour, under the associations of this place. Here have you been assembled for your daily worship during the years that are now finished. Here all of you, as we hope, have now and then been lifted to higher aspira-

tions, and attained to better purposes, even if these aspirations have often dissolved like the breath of the morning, and these resolves have been melted in the fires of temptation. To this place and its worship, all of you will look back as to the sacred altar in the home from which you so soon are to go forth as wanderers in the journey of life, or, it may be, as combatants in its stern conflicts.

But though you have been trained by the forms of Christian worship, and under the influences of a positive Christian faith, it has been in no narrow or technical spirit, least of all with any limitations upon the freest inquiries, or any fear of the wakeful criticism of the times. You have been encouraged by example and precept to prove all things by the tests appropriate to each and every truth. At the same time, you have been admonished to hold fast whatever is good in the great truths of Christian theism, Christian history, Christian ethics, and the Christian salvation. I need not say that to the enforcement of these truths this college is pledged by all the traditions of the past, by all the obligations of the present, and by all the hopes of the future. And yet it is now, as it ever has been, foremost in testing these old truths by the lights of the severest criticism, and fearless in casting these most precious ores into the hottest fires of fresh inquiries. And still we find reason to make no concessions to the spirit of the times, which shall abate one jot of our allegiance to Him who is finally to rule the faith of all human kind, and to triumph over every opposing thought. You will bear witness that such is the free, yet reverent, spirit in which you have been trained and taught, and that this is the genius which controls this place. Were this to cease to be true, it were better far, in the words of my loved and honored predecessor, that these walls were razed to the ground,

and these endowments were scattered to the winds. You are to live, as I have reminded you, in the times when the most important principles are heavily tried, not only in the outer conflicts of action, but in the inner conflicts of faith and feeling. In this trial, both the outer and the inner, may you quit yourselves like men who are mature in thought, wise in action, and strong and consistent in character. Do not entertain for a moment the thought that the more critical thinking of these times makes it especially difficult for an earnest and honest student to attain to a positive faith and an earnest life. The contrary seems to be true. While it is easy, perhaps easier than ever, for the student and reader to find plausible reasons for hesitation and denial, and still more easy to lapse into self-indulgent habits, it was never so easy to find the most satisfactory footing for a positive and enlightened faith, and the most stirring and rational incitements to a consecrated life.

Though you have in a sense lived apart from the world, you have already seen and heard enough of the world, through the loopholes of your retreat, to be impressed with the instability and the uncertainty of the things of earth. Even in your brief college life-time, you have seen great fortunes vanish in a day, the nation's pride cut down in a moment, great reputations dissolve at a touch, and plausible theories perish as in a night. You have already had sufficient experience to be assured that there is little that is permanent on the earth except an upright purpose, a manly and unselfish disposition, and a loving and considerate life. You have had experiences still more serious and more elevating, — the experiences that carried your thoughts into that other life, so near and yet so far, towards which we are all moving, and into which any of us, however young or strong, may be suddenly summoned. You

will not soon forget the day when you walked up these aisles, a weeping, broken-hearted company, following the remains of one of your noblest and best beloved, who had hoped so much and enjoyed so little of this last college year. In that hour there was nothing nearer or more precious to your thoughts than the unseen life into which he had vanished; nothing more consoling than the evidence that his thoughts and affections had been conversant with that life, and that with prayerful tenderness he had parted with father and mother and brother upon its confines. At that moment, there was nothing so much needed by each one of you, as the manifestation of the living God as your hope and portion for life and death.

Surely the convictions experienced in such an hour are truer and more trustworthy than the sneering scepticism which stakes all its hopes upon the doubtful hypothesis of material relationships, or the confident criticism that dismisses the Christian history with one of those theories that change with every season, or the all-ingulfing philosophy that so confidently tells the fortunes of a universe which is self-evolved from nothing, and ends in the fireworks of a self-exploded chaos.

May the memories of that hour, and of all the other ennobling and uplifting hours of your college-life, of this place, of these studies, these enjoyments, these contests, these defeats, these companionships, these aspirations, these truths, and these hopes, make you all strong and true-hearted men, the servants of the truth, the servants of your generation, and the servants of God.

These are my best wishes, as I bid you an affectionate farewell.



## XVII.

### *SUCCESS IN LIFE.\**

"AND BESIDE THIS, GIVING ALL DILIGENCE, ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE;  
AND TO VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE;

"AND TO KNOWLEDGE TEMPERANCE; AND TO TEMPERANCE PATIENCE; AND  
TO PATIENCE GODLINESS;

"AND TO GODLINESS BROTHERLY KINDNESS; AND TO BROTHERLY KIND-  
NESS CHARITY.

"FOR IF THESE THINGS BE IN YOU, AND AROUND, THEY MAKE YOU THAT  
YE SHALL NEITHER BE BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR  
LORD JESUS CHRIST."—*2 Peter i. 5-8.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his fine essay on Marcus Aurelius, raised the interesting question, whether the imperial yet gentle Stoic had ever encountered the Christian sect which was persecuted during his reign, in any such way as to understand its characteristic aims and spirit. He ventures the suggestion that this was impossible. Otherwise, he argues, his attention could not but have been arrested by the nobleness of the one; while his heart would have been touched by the gentleness of the other. Were we to suppose a Christianized Stoic to have met his emperor, he would have expounded his new faith in terms not unlike these which we find in the first chapter of this Epistle. Or we might imagine the master of the world to have entered a Christian assembly by night, and in disguise, and to have listened to an exposition of the new faith from a thoughtful believer, perhaps one of his own household. Had

\* *June 21, 1885.*

he done so, he would have heard a philosophy of life not unlike that which we find in the chapter from which our text is taken. Indeed, the whole of this passage might have fallen from the lips of a converted Stoic, as, with tender gratitude and exultant hope, he should expound his new-found secret. We call this a philosophy of life; and yet it is none the less a gospel because it is a philosophy. It is full of good news for man's comfort and hope, although it overflows with instruction for his guidance. It is none the less a philosophy because it is also a gospel, stating the old problems which had vexed the earnest thinkers from the beginning, and solving them more satisfactorily than was ever done before. It is pre-eminently a practical philosophy, recognizing distinctly the fact that the world is reeking with corruption through lust, and that deliverance is promised through the love and gratitude which its exceeding great and precious promises call forth. This love and gratitude would impel to a peculiar kind of life. This life is briefly sketched in its prominent features of duty, and conducted in triumph to its close. In these particulars it stands in striking contrast to the stoicism of modern times, which rejects it with disdain. To the considerations of this Christian idea of a successful life I ask your attention, as appropriate to the present occasion.

First of all, this life is founded upon faith. The direction, "Add to your faith virtue," or as the Revised Version has it, "In your faith supply virtue," does not recognize faith as co-ordinate with these other virtues, but derives from faith the various excellencies of character which are named. In naming each and all, it presupposes faith as the root from which all proceed. In this sense the Christian ideal of living begins with and presupposes a religion or a personal trust and love

towards Christ as the object of love and confidence. It binds us to him by an act of allegiance, in which are blended honor and gratitude, love and hope. This peculiarity, in the opinion of some, takes the Christian life out of any kindred with philosophy; while in the judgment of others, it gives to it as a philosophy an additional and peculiar charm.

This faith is more than an intellectual assent to a speculative truth or an historical fact. It is more than credit to any fact, or assent to any truth. It is an act of loving devotion to a person in answer to his claims upon the heart, the response to his manifold love of grateful devotion, the reception of his offered pardon with renunciation of the forgiven sin, the consecration of the life to his cause, and a steadfast and open avowal of discipleship. Such a faith by no means excludes definite views of Christ's nature and work,—whence he came and whither he goes; what he must be as divine or as human,—but it enters into the human soul and into human society as a living power, by its joyful and loving realization of Christ as the master of the heart, who, though he was dead, yet lives, and, behold! is alive for evermore; but who is yet as near and as sympathizing to every disciple as when he spoke words of personal tenderness to the weakest and the most disconsolate, or wept tears of sympathy at Lazarus' grave. That this was the view of the writer of this Epistle, and, with him, of the early Church, is most obvious. It was to Christ as a fact of human history, who a few years previous had been a living person among the haunts and ways of men, that he turned back in his vivid recollections to him who, by the charm of his moral loveliness, and the power of his divine authority, had won his believing love and his fervent devotion. Hence he declares, "We did not follow cunningly devised fables,

... but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." We cannot doubt that at every recollection of the Christ whom he had known in the past, when coupled with the vivid impression of what he was in the present, he gathered fresh inspiration. It was the Christ whom he remembered on earth, in his many acts of personal tenderness, in every look of human sympathy and majestic purity, whom he had also followed with wondering amazement as he ascended from his sight, and whom he now contemplated with worshipping faith. It was this Christ who gave him the courage and hope through which he could endure and do all things, even on the cross or at the stake. It was the reflex of the like faith with feebler energy, but similar in kind, that the Stoic emperor would have found in any Christian assembly which, humble and obscure as it might have been, throbbed with the energy that was even then beginning to renew the moral life of humanity. It was by faith in Christ as such a person, that the Roman world was conquered to his name. If the New Testament is worth any thing as a piece of history, it portrays hundreds and thousands of believing souls, living, suffering, and dying for their allegiance to a person whose earthly body had been slain, but who was now alive upon the throne of almighty power, to accept the personal homage of his disciples, and to inspire them to a kind and degree of homage such as the world had never seen. No other fact of history is so well established, as that, true or false, this was the faith that inspired their lives. Whether it was reasonable or unreasonable, it was faith in Christ as a person that enabled them to do

and suffer as they did. More than this is true. Christ as a person exemplified and honored a type of character, which the world, as he found it, had rejected and despised. The characteristic spirit of his life was not in harmony with the virtues which the best leaders of the world had been disposed to honor. It was to honor these very virtues, — those virtues which we call Christian, — and set them in their rightful place, that he used the whole force of his person, backed as it was with miracles, and invested with the indescribable charm of his mysterious authority. We forget that these virtues, which we now call Christian, were characteristics which the Stoic despised and the Pharisee loathed and the Sadducee scorned, and that by them Christ was brought to his cross. Still further, we forget that it was by this very act of humiliation that Christ exalted these virtues to the throne of the world's homage, and conquered a place for them in the heart and reverence of Christendom. Still further, we forget that it was by the force and energy of faith in the real Christ that men have learned to honor and love the ideal Christ. It is simply because so many generations of men have struggled and prayed and sacrificed and died through their faith in the actual Christ, that the world has been trained to that spiritual discernment and moral elevation which honors the ideal Christ, who, when on earth, had not where to lay his head. Atheist and agnostic, secularist and worldling, now unite in homage or in loud acclaim before the idealized myth or the romantic dream in which criticism and philosophy profess to have found the secret of the mystery. "Thou hast conquered the world, O Galilean!" Theodore Parker, who scorned to find in Christ any thing more than the world's ideal man, says this man has consummated the world's idea, and there can never be any thing higher or better.

George Eliot, whose early life seems to have been steeped in zeal for the name and cause of Christ, but who afterwards denied his personal power, could find nothing to give her inspiration or comfort in the gloomy depression of her later creed, which could take the place of Thomas à Kempis and the crucifix. Whatever else these facts signify, they signify the change which faith in Christ as a person has effected in the world's estimate of Christ as an ideal. While we lay the stress upon faith as allegiance to Christ as a person, we may not forget that such a faith must, in a certain sense, involve a creed expressed or implied. We cannot believe in a person without some intellectual judgment concerning his personality, and his relations to God and man. This is true. All knowledge of every kind and of every subject-matter involves some intellectual conviction or implied assent. Allegiance of any kind,—loving and trusting allegiance, consecrating worship, hope, trust, and self-sacrifice,—all imply belief that the object of faith is more or less distinctly known as warranting and requiring the love and confidence which we give. Hence it has been rashly concluded that the faith which is required of man, and is the condition of his better life, must always be an exact and well-defined system of truth, accurately stated, thoroughly reasoned, and carefully adjusted in all its parts. Theological divisions and sectarian strifes tend to deepen this impression, just in proportion as the attention is occupied by the discussion and defence of matters of secondary importance.

The prevalence of doubt and denial in respect to the fundamental truths of religion, tends to unsettle the minds of thoughtful men. Men of reading and education cannot, if they would, be ignorant of the bold assaults, and the often weak and partial defences, of the faith with which modern literature abounds. Faith, to

be worth any thing, or worthy a thinking man, must be a reasonable or rational act; and a reasonable faith must be a thoroughly reasoned product, which nothing but thought and time can mature. It follows, many conclude, that faith for them at present is impossible. If it comes at all, it must come as the conclusion of patient study and protracted inquiry. Hence many reflecting men abandon the prospect of a strong and settled faith in utter despair. Faith, they say, requires inquiry and thought; and thought and inquiry cost time and effort. Hence the inspiration of faith must, for the present, be abandoned by them.

What shall we say upon this point? First of all, a correct and complete intellectual creed concerning the person does not of itself imply loving allegiance; nor important as it may be, for many reasons, does not of necessity indicate any religious or moral worth. There is no more merit involved in a correct theory of religious truth as such, than in a correct theory of geology or physics. Such correctness of creed may indicate or promote honesty and earnestness of mind, but they do not necessarily involve either. As a means of good, and a sign of good, these may be useful; but of themselves they have neither merit nor demerit. What is still more significant, faith may co-exist with a very scanty creed. Pre-eminently is this true of the countless questions in regard to which theologians by profession differ, and over which Christian sects too often wrangle. To apprehend an object that moves the feelings and impels to heroic action, is quite compatible with utter inability to analyze what moves the heart, and much more to define and explain it. A man may believe in beauty to the eye and music to the ear, in noble men and noble deeds, and be moved by his faith to the costliest sacrifices and the complete surrendering of his being, and

not be able to define or explain the nature of either beauty or music. In like manner, a man may believe in Christ to the saving of his soul, and to the complete transformation of his life, without any theological theory of Christ's person or Christ's work, or any definite creed which would begin to pass for theology. That man may be moved and transformed by what is true concerning Christ, even though he cannot phrase this truth in consistent or orthodox language, is, or ought to be, one of the axioms of Christian truth.

Not that a rational judgment of what we believe is not of very great importance, nor that, in some sense, it is not a necessity to our reflective reason, but that the reflective or analytic power of itself neither gives faith its effectiveness nor measures its energy.

It is this apprehension of faith as a loving trust in a person, that enables us to understand the power for goodness which lies in trusting childhood and in unlettered simplicity, when either acts or speaks itself out with the energy and directness of simple conviction which awakens contagious and responsive sympathy.

While, then, it is of prime importance that the thinking believer should buttress his faith with reflective thought, and be always ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him, it should ever be remembered that the power of faith to transform the personal life is found in loving allegiance to the personal Christ.

We know very well that, for certain reasons, it was never so hard to believe in this personal and Christian sense, especially for a certain class of cultivated men, as it is at the present moment. But, on the other hand, it was never so hard not to believe, because it was never so hard for such men to live without faith. The universe is now so vast, so abounding in force and law, and God is so great, that it is difficult to imagine that



he should come to man and visit him in person. But, on the other hand, if the universe is so great and God is so high, the greater is the need that God should come to man, that man may rise to Him; and the more bewildered and helpless is man if Christ did not come and has not gone again to God. Or, if we pursue like thoughts in another direction, what is man to himself without faith? Never, never before was he so helpless and alone. True, he knows more than at any previous time,—more of the past and the present and the future; more of himself, it may be, and more of the universe. In one sense he is more at home in this universe than ever before. With what serene, yet with what would fain be a dignified, contempt does he look back upon the sciences of the past! With what a comfortable assurance does he explain and predict and say, I told you so, and I now tell you so: wait and see what will happen! And yet if there is no mind behind this visible scene in whom to trust, no love in which to confide, no inspiring example to stimulate, no friend stronger than death and mightier than the grave, surely man was never so miserable as now. The vastness of the universe redoubles and prolongs the echoes of his despairing cry, No God! No God! The certainty and universality of law give him only the calm assurance of scientific despair. The deepened experience of uncertainty in the struggles of life, intensifies the bitterness of disappointment and the emptiness of success. In place of a cheerful hope in the divine goodness, and the pitying sympathy of the Son of God, a contemptuous pessimism rules the hour, that scornfully flings away the very suggestion of hopeful and cheerful faith either in God or man, or a gloomy stoicism that folds its hands with a piteous smile of forced submission, with the felt agony of mute despair.

2. We pass next to the exemplification of faith in character and conduct. All men, in these days, who think, agree that character and conduct are the grand *desiderata* in human well being. Theists and agnostics, optimists and pessimists, selfists and altruists, all consent that the manhood which we attain and exemplify is the supreme thing to care for; and the achievement of the ideal manhood is the criterion by which to measure success in life. The theory of the apostle is similar. He magnifies character as the chief aim; and yet he defines the ideal man in a way peculiar to himself. To your faith, or in your faith, supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge temperance; and in temperance patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren, love or charity. Notice that he does not mean, nor does he say, *add* to faith, as co-ordinate with it, the virtues which he names, but let your faith manifest or exercise itself in these forms of activity. The New-Testament theory is never, as some conceive it, so much faith and so many works; Believe in Christ for acceptance, and do manifold good actions, by way of propriety or as a make-weight; but it is, Let your loving allegiance to Christ be so strong that it cannot but manifest itself in every conceivable form of character and conduct which human nature makes possible. The heart that is thus controlled and transformed is a human heart. It is endowed with human sensibilities, and connected with its kind by human relations. For this reason, its loving faith in Christ cannot but make itself felt through every one of these special impulses, and in every variety of human excellence. Were this believing allegiance to Christ to make us cease to be men, it would make us monsters. Were it to dry up the fountains of human emotion, or to cease to impel us to

those actions which are characteristically human, it would itself cease to be divine, because it would mar and distort the image of God. We are not unmindful that many theological theories and many practical counsels have a strong tendency thus to dehumanize man; and we are as well aware that the theoretical and practical mischief which they occasion, effectually condemns them as false and mischievous. The argument still remains good, — these things are pleasing to God and profitable to men. For this very reason, the contrary theory needs to be restricted, and the specific obligation to apply our religious incitements in every possible human activity needs to be definitely recognized and faithfully enforced. The teachings of our Lord are most explicit from the beginning, in which he so clearly declares the rules of practical discipleship, to the anticipated sentence in which he shall say in judgment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Faith or loving allegiance is no reality unless it impels to all the varied forms of human feeling and activity for which our human nature provides the occasions, and to which it impels by the calls and appeals of our human life. There is no possible opportunity for the activity which man requires, except in the relationships of man with man. The attempt to strengthen one's faith by employing the thoughts upon God alone, in offices of devotion, or in the aimless realization of scenes which the senses cannot picture and the imagination cannot outline, inflates and deceives with unsatisfying illusions, or discourages and depresses with mortifying disappointment. But the attempt to carry this spirit of devotional aspiration into the human affections, and to make it the unfailing spring of human duty, both acts and re-acts to elevate man to God and to bring God down to man. In

this sense do we interpret the direction, Add, or supply, to your faith, virtue and godliness and brotherly kindness. By this rule do we reconcile the freedom of unconditional pardon and the joy of believing faith, with the impulse to every kind of labor and sacrifice, which is enforced everywhere in the New Testament. With these principles in mind, we may ask, What are the characteristically Christian duties? What are the forms of Christian activity which the apostle here recognizes as our aim and rule in life? It is obvious that he attempts no complete catalogue of Christian virtues, and that we find none in the New Testament. Therein is evinced divine discernment and forecast—a discernment of the fact that to attempt to classify the possible virtues must be a failure; and forecast, that as man should make progress in his individual and social life, new duties would come to the front, the names of which had not yet been devised. Some of the virtues named by the apostle are recognized as characteristically Christian, and in so far novel, having been of infrequent occurrence among the pagan Greeks, because there were neither thoughts nor ideals to require them. We may even say that were Socrates to appear in our modern life, with no other conceptions than those of his own time, he would scarcely understand many of the names of the virtues that have been created by the Christian family; that Plato would find himself embarrassed by the dialect of the Christian commonwealth; and Aristotle would be puzzled at much of the terminology which has been evolved in our social life.

Notice some of these terms of feeling and act which appear in our text, and ponder them in the light of these thoughts. Virtue or manly courage, and knowledge and temperance and patience, we may concede were not unknown before the time of Paul; while godliness

and love of the brethren are distinctly Christian conceptions with a distinctively Christian meaning; and the love which he superadds to all the rest, as the comprehensive duty that binds all the other duties of heart as by a golden thread, is characteristically a Christian conception which came into the world with Christ, and was first uttered in its fulness of meaning by Christ himself. Taken together, and as forming a connected whole, these duties represent a type of character which challenges the scrutinizing admiration of the curious, and invests the tests of our life with the earnestness of the day of judgment.

Faith being presupposed as the condition or substructure, the thought might occur that the supposed pagan excellence of courage or manly energy has no place in such a connection; and yet was there ever a courage in warrior or martyr, nay, even in woman or child, that could compare with that with which the Christian faith has clothed herself, as with an armor of mail? It is equally pertinent, but almost equally unexpected, that knowledge or discriminating judgment should be specially enjoined. The injunction to temperance in the control of the animal impulses might occasion no surprise, nor that of patient endurance; although the temperance that comes of a spiritual taste is of a higher quality, and the patience that is sustained by faith can literally endure all things. Godliness or reverent devotedness as a habit of the soul, as we have already said, is a virtue of Jewish and Christian parentage in its eminent sense; and love of the brethren as a special affection is pre-eminently Christian. But how came this ideal into the thoughts of men? and, further, how came it to be invested with such honor and authority in the hearts of men?

This ideal, let it be remembered, when taken as a

whole, is a Christian ideal of the life which every man ought to aspire to live. The Christian believer has learned to acknowledge its excellence, to bow before its authority, and to struggle for its realization. The excellence of this ideal has become more and generally cordially approved by those whose opinions command respect, or represent the consenting judgment of their fellows. But how was it when these words were first written? How would they have sounded in the ear of the thoughtful Stoic who had chanced to hear them in a Christian assembly, or recognized them as expressing the aspirations and judgments of the early disciples? Possibly he might have honored the motives, while he commiserated the judgment, of these well-meaning but weakly men. As for the virtues named, the most of them would have been a positive offence to his convictions and his tastes; and as for the populace, who professed no philosophy; as to the average Roman world, — the men who farmed the revenue, and filled the offices, and directed, and paid for the public games, — would not both philosophers and the great public have regarded them all with utter contempt or disdain, as being weak and mean, — utterly inconsistent with the hard sense of practical men, and the refined sense of men of culture, and, consequently, as having little or no authority with either.

What a contrast do we find in the views of the ideal of life between the literature even of Cicero and of Horace, and the English literature of Coleridge and Tennyson, or even of Froude and Matthew Arnold? And how has this change been brought about? How many sermons and how many exhortations has it cost? and how many examples struggling against adverse influences at home and abroad? How many bold defenders and silent actors of the better life? All along,

during these struggling years, the great words of the New Testament have been devoutly perused in Christian homes and in Christian closets. Even where its story could not be read, the crucifix which could be seen in wayside chapel or solemn cathedral, has witnessed to patient love and courage stronger than death; and the pictured virgin has, all the while, looked an example of tender compassion and patient intercession. Manifold other influences, also, have wrought into the world's opinion and rule of life; one golden thread after another of blessed Christian sentiment has displaced the old maxims and sentiments of selfishness and cruelty and revenge, till the old and coarse laws of savageness and butchery have given place to the new commandment which Christ gave to his disciples, which has baptized them into a new name, and been enacted as a new rule and ideal of aspiration and action. It would seem, in view of all this progress in the past, that whatever the conduct and character of thinking men were likely to become, this rule of thinking and feeling was, and would remain forever, unchanged; that the rule which prescribes virtue and knowledge and temperance and patience and godliness and love of the brethren and charity, would forever stand in speculative honor as sacred truth. All this would seem to be natural and actual, but yet it is not exactly so. One of the strange aspects of our own times is an attempt, in some quarters, to return to the hard Stoic ideal, and to reject the Christian rule of feeling and of conduct. It is none other than the theoretic exaltation of selfishness and self-seeking, and the condemnation of the temper and acts, which are characteristically Christian. It would seem as though, with the rejection of the doctrine that God is the Father of spirits, the inference is tacitly implied or silently enforced, that his creatures should no longer be the

objects of sympathizing pity or Christ-like sacrifice ; that under the sanction of a theory of physics which finds the origin of the universe in the pantheistic fire-mist, the rule for human ethics was condensed into the maxim, "Look out for thyself, and assert and establish all thine interests into rights." It would seem as though men in Christendom were soon to be divided into two classes : those who believe in the Father of spirits, who is an example and the inspirer of love to men in all its forms of self-sacrifice ; and those who deny God, and believe in looking out for themselves. If this is so, there is the more reason that we should re-enact as our rule in life, "giving all diligence, in your faith supply virtue ; and in your virtue knowledge ; and in your knowledge temperance ; and in your temperance patience ; and in your patience godliness ; and in your godliness love of the brethren ; and in your love of the brethren love."

3. This leads us to the thought, — such a life is an assured success. "If these things are yours, and abound, they make you not to be idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." "For if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble." Such a life as this — a life characterized by these features — cannot be a failure. Whatever sacrifices it may involve, whatever losses it may appoint, whatever enemies it may make, whatever poverty or sickness it may bring, if it be a life of faith within, exemplified by activity without, in all these forms of act and suffering, it will be a life of light and peace and hope. No other plan of life can assure success, for the reason that success of any other kind involves conditions which no man can control, — as bodily and mental health, foresight, friends, favoring circumstances, and those thousand accidents which mar or make one's fortune, none of which are assured to any man. But if a man maintains a supreme allegiance to



Christ as his Master and Guide, and if he exemplifies that faith in all the activities of his human nature and the opportunities of human life, he cannot fail.

Every day brings to such a man its occasion for duty ; and the demands of duty are responded to at every instant of his life when he hears a command from his Master. Every fellow-man whom he encounters utters a call for sympathy, or help, or protest, or reproof. Every earthly duty is both enforced and transfigured by the light which it reflects from heaven. The experiences of the past give him courage and hope for the future. The power of habit becomes a second nature to sustain and impel him in his course. The attestation of his past experience and the sunlight of his future aspirations assure him that he walks in the truth and in the light.

Philosophy, both ancient and modern, can teach a man to bear and endure most of the evils of life with patience and self-control. It can also enforce a wise remedy for each, with manifold lessons of prudence in avoiding greater and lesser evils ; and whatever it can teach, it is needful that we should learn. The gospel does not dispense with this necessity, nor with the aid of both philosophy and common sense. It sends every man to the school of common sense and experience, and bids him learn the lessons which they inculcate, but it enforces them by the authority of the Master, in motives which no philosophy can furnish. The Christian philosophy of life is the farthest removed from that sentimental moonshine, on the one hand, which rests in the phrases of an inflated and affected phraseology, as it is from the dogmatism of a hard and godless so-called common sense. A stilted pietism that hides its head in the clouds, and rarely looks upon the ground on which it is forced to tread, will stumble at every step, and bring the world's ridicule and contempt as it sees it reel and fall. But a Chris-

tian common sense that is radiant with Christian love, exalts human nature to its highest manifestations, and gives the humblest men in the lowliest positions a dignity which commands respect.

The gospel does not promise to the rash and the reckless, because they are innocent and earnest, any exemption from the natural consequences of headlong imprudence, wilful or thoughtless. It does not feed the improvident, nor clothe the indolent, nor send money or friends to the praying beggar who refuses to labor because he has religious aspirations or religious hopes. It does not absolve any man from his subjection to the conditions and the penalties of natural law. Faith does not relieve the believer from the necessities of doing and suffering for himself and by himself, according to the physical and moral conditions of his individual and social nature. But though faith acts in harmony with material and spiritual law, it has laws and conditions of its own, which assure peace, contentment, and submission even under the sharp retributions of imprudence and mistakes; which can bring out of repentance and true contrition the peculiar joys of forgiveness to the unworthy, and to all men the peace of God which passeth understanding.

Aside from these spiritual enjoyments, without which success in life can never begin, the constant recognition of duty to Christ as the law of one's life, and the service of Christ as the supreme and, so to speak, the sole occupation of our being, and of the spirit of Christ as one's controlling inspiration, give an elevation and a conscious dignity to life with which no other impelling force can compare. The constant recognition of the fact that one supreme object can alone stand the test of scrutinizing judgment, and the continued reference to it as the touchstone of our life, give confidence and inward self-reliance. The unflinching application of

this law to every act and feeling imparts self-control and self-satisfaction ; while the exercise for the well-being of man of every gift which we possess, whether of wealth, or learning, or station, awakens the highest satisfaction, and blesses the conscience with the peace of God.

The remark is so often quoted as to have become commonplace, — after all, the most which one can get out of life is usefulness. If this is true, it takes life at once out of all low and selfish relations. It makes the discipline of character its noblest aim and end. It tells us that what we are, not what we gain or get of fame or money or learning, gives the supreme value to our living. So soon as life is thus valued for its discipline of character, then the most of its problems are solved ; its dark passages glow with light ; its seeming inequalities are all adjusted ; its heart-breaking disappointments are explained. Every complication of evil which otherwise were a tangled maze, becomes a scene of order and beauty. So soon as another life comes into view, then the much vexed question whether life is worth living is answered ; and the motive to live this life well, because it fits us for another, comes home to us as a solution of our doubts and a charge to give all diligence to exemplify our faith in every opportunity of act or suffering. All our difficulties about the gratuitousness of pardon and the confidence of faith vanish as soon as we see that a trusting and loving gratitude to Christ is, in its very nature, a living impulse to every variety of human affection and action. If we ask, Why is life so checkered and so strange ? why so incomplete with some, and so finished with others ? why so stormy with some, and so peaceful with others ? why so bright to one, and so dark and despairing to another ? we can only say — and when we say that we can say enough, in effect we say all — that life does not end with the bodily and the earthly,

but introduces us to other scenes. It is, consequently, a most natural transition by which the apostle passes from the present to the future life, and tells us, — connecting fidelity and energy in the one, with a complete fitness and a more hearty welcome in the other — “If ye do these things, ye shall never stumble,” neither in this life nor in the future; “for there shall be supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

4. We have already anticipated our concluding thought, — the relations of our ideal life to the future. Our reasonings and our hopes have brought us to the threshold of the life which is to be, and made us to step over that threshold so easily and naturally as not to know that we have crossed it at all. This is what the Christian life involves, — a natural and easy entrance into another sphere of activity and living, the reality of glorious scenes, and the ready response of the soul richly prepared for all by the discipline of life. This is the crown and culmination of the ideal life, that in its plans and purposes, its aspirations and hopes, its standards of character, and its loftiest moods, it should be in harmony with the life which it will take up when it shall drop the body and wake to the realizations of the better life. What this waking shall involve, we cannot anticipate. It is well that we should not. Otherwise our bodily life would be no discipline to our fidelity; but in place of this, would become a constant temptation to discontent and self-indulgence. It is eminently true, and the more we think and question and seek to discover, the more convinced shall we become, that we know not what we shall be. We cannot know, and ought not to desire to know, physically or psychologically considered, much of the nature and conditions of that life. We have no data for scientific

theorizing to work upon, or for the imagination to inflate into brilliant phantasms. But we know that we shall be like Him whom we love and live for, for we shall see him as he is. It is but sober truth to believe that the man who has trusted his Master in loving allegiance under all the disabilities of humanity, shall respond with fervent and completed consecration to the distinct manifestation of Christ to his astonished vision. It is equally rational to believe that to those who have anticipated the atmosphere of that life by large inspirations, it shall be home-like from the first; that its welcoming gates shall open wide for such with generous hospitality. It is rational to believe that this is possible. Nay, more, it is rational to believe that it will be a fact. To be assured of this hope has been the triumph of Christian philosophy. To anticipate such a life in heaven, so as to be transfigured by it into a new life on earth, has been the triumph of Christian feeling and action. The more vividly men have made real to their faith the pitying and guiding love of Christ, and made joyous to their experience the power of his resurrection, the more confident have they been of the reality of this future blessedness. What a wonderful story might be told of the progressive strength with which this faith has taken hold of the creeds and philosophy of Christendom! How has it wrought itself into its literature! How has it enriched our poetry and our fiction! How tender and spiritual has it made the heart of childhood! How pathetic has it made the experience of parents, at the thought of the infant that was early lost, and the son or daughter who had been cut down in the flush and promise of youth! How serene and self-possessed has it made old age, as it turns its last look of blessing on the earth, and its first look forward into the opening heavens! How slowly has a rational theory of the cer-

tainty and the nature of the future life gained upon the Christian Church! and yet how strong has it become! How strongly and compactly knit is the logic which commends it to the honest heart! What a contrast in every particular between heathendom and Christendom in their conceptions of the future life and the motives which each derives from its theory!

But the strangest of all the facts of our modern life is, that men of science and culture are so ready to fling away their immortality at the first challenge of its proof, and to dispense with its inspiration and its comfort at the mere suggestions of a materialism which is far enough from being demonstrated, and an agnosticism whose dogmatism has any air rather than that of modest doubt. In other words, how strange that so many should deliberately sacrifice the hopes and impulses of a Christian immortality, and trample into scorn both the doctrines and the proof and, most of all, the living power and well-supported story of Him who abolished death, and brought immortality to light. No phenomenon is more strange than the easy acceptance of negative suggestions concerning a matter in regard to which certainty is most called for. The old Stoics could hardly think it comported with the dignity of their pantheistic divinity to save from extinction any others than the aristocracy of the universe. But they had never heard the gospel story of the pitying and redeeming God, nor imagined its divine pathos, nor witnessed its uplifting power. It is not strange that they should not have conceived such a theory as the Christian immortality brought to light by the condescending love of God, nor, perhaps, that, when it was first proclaimed as a verified fact, they should have hesitated to receive it, or even have smiled at its splendid promises. But that our new Stoics should so readily part with its inspiration,

at the suggestions of unpledged and unproved hypotheses, betokens greater heartlessness of feeling than it does profoundness of insight. It savors more of quickness of wit than it does of sobriety of judgment. It would seem as though it were the name rather than the reality of science that had bewildered or bewitched them to throw overboard the only compass by which man could steer, because of sundry difficulties in the theory of its magnetism, rather than thankfully accept its guidance. What is more wondrous still, the Christian hopes and impulses which they reject are no longer ridiculed and scorned as they were by the ancient Stoics. They are honored and blessed as an inspiration by the new prophets of unbelief, even when they are belied and rejected as truths. The sad lady who, after giving to the English-speaking world a series of wondrous tales drawn from the Christian aspirations of her earlier years, has left behind her the more pathetic story of her own later life when bereft of this faith and hope, is herself a striking example of what the Christian faith in immortality is worth while it is retained, and of how much is forfeited when it is weakened or lost.

The rash and deliberate suicides that multiply around us are at once a proof of how unchristian is this life which so many cultivated people propose to themselves in a Christian land, and how antichristian their estimates of the future, and how debasing is the most cultured life in which there is no God, no worship, no prayer, and no hope.

These indications and tendencies enjoin on every one the duty, as well as commend the privilege, of anticipating the activities of the eternal life, and even now and then of breaking forth into the raptures of its eternal songs. It invests the hope of a holy immortality with an energy for good, with which nothing else can be

compared. It elevates the imagination to the higher conceptions of the Christian life when enlightened by reflection, and stimulated by feeling, and confirmed by action. It stands in the way of every sinful indulgence, every hurtful desire, every maddening passion, every act of deceit; in short, it withstands every thing that is mean or low or revengeful or selfish, like an angel with a drawn sword protesting in the name of the Eternal Judge, "Will ye judge yourselves unworthy of the eternal life?"

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class*,—If it is ever natural and reasonable to frame an ideal of the future, and to exalt such an ideal to a hope and a promise, it is natural and reasonable for you. These eventful days draw very definite lines in your life. They sharply and distinctly terminate the past, and as positively hide the future. As you look over the boundary that divides the two, looking backward, you see a distinct picture crowded with well-remembered events, gay and bright on the one hand, dark and sombre on the other,—bright with hilarity and hope, or gloomy with sorrow and disappointment; but in all its changes glowing with an intense and energetic social and individual activity. As you look forward to the future, it is hidden from your view by a curtain, beneath which and through which you cannot look. In vain do you attempt even to draw in outline the scenes that await you, to forecast the employments, the friends, the loves, the joys, the sorrows, the successes, and the disappointments that are to make up your future. You can discern nothing: you can foretell nothing.

But you can control the purpose that shall characterize that life; and in so far can determine the life itself in its essential features and its final destiny. Shall it be



a life of strong, distinct, and fervent faith in the Christ, who is accepted by all noble souls as the ideal of human excellence, and by faith in whom, as a living and reigning King, all Christendom is now moving forward to higher achievements and nobler aims and enterprises? Shall your faith be so applied to your own life, that you shall be transformed into his likeness, more and more consciously to yourselves, and become more and more distinctly a power among your fellow-men in every form of Christian activity and usefulness?

You have been taught that such is eminently a reasonable service; that in what you are summoned to believe you are not only justified by reason, but commanded by reason to rise to faith. You have also been taught that faith is no mechanical and isolated activity of the spirit, but that it is the spring and root of the spiritual life, comprehending all the virtues and graces which elevate man and adorn human life. You have also learned that as the Christian life is better understood and more perfectly exemplified, the wider and more varied will be its illumination, and the higher and more blessed will be its earthly joys. You have also learned to look forward into the life which is immortal; which seems so far, and yet is, in fact, so near; which seems unlike, and yet is so similar to the earthly life in its springs of good. You have been trained to think of the present as an anticipation and discipline for the joys and activities of a perfected future; that a life of active and trusting service on earth is a discipline for the joys that are none the less human because they are satisfying and immortal.

Be not weakened in your faith or courage because of the credulity or flippancy of rampant unbelief, or the slowness and uncertainty of honest doubt. Hold fast to whatever faith you have, and give it all the nourish-

ment which you can, not for your own strength, but for the well-being of others. Remember that the solemn responsibilities of duty extend to what a man believes as truly as to what he is or does; that in proportion to the readiness with which sceptical suggestions are entertained and yielded to, in the same measure is the believer bound to be so assured of his faith as to assert and defend it. Keep in mind the fact that, however hard it is to believe the spiritual verities in which Christianity stands, it is more difficult to reject and deny them; that if the advances of science and the discoveries of criticism require new theories and interpretations, it is also true that the convictions of honest men rest more solidly than ever in the verities which concern God and duty and the immortal life, and Christ and love and self-denial and prayer, and that increase of faith is to come with greater energy of the believing life, and that, consequently, the scepticism which alarms and dispirits ought, rather, to arouse to greater faith and consistency in Christian living. Let your faith and conduct be thoroughly manly and intelligent. In your faith supply virtue; and in virtue knowledge. In understanding be ye men. Dismiss at once, and forever, the impression that the meekness or simplicity of the Christian spirit has any affinity with either ignorance or weakness, or that the humility of the gospel involves any savor or loss of self-respect. Let no man persuade you that you ought not to think in respect to the grounds of your faith or the reasons for duty. The service of Christ is a reasonable service; and our first and constant duty is to make it appear reasonable to ourselves and to our fellow-men. Unless our faith has this strong root by which to hold, it can neither be fruitful in its growth nor in its products. In these days, for a thinking man not to think about his religious duties, is to commit a mortal sin against his Christian life.

Remember that fruitfulness of life, in any form, depends on the energy of individual faith; and that faith depends upon the fidelity with which the convictions are obeyed. Remember, above all, that the present life in its main features is prolonged and perpetuated in the future; that an intelligent and courageous and useful and prayerful and unselfish and patient and forgiving life on earth, which is fed from a living spring by a living faith, opens wide the gates of entrance into the kingdom which cannot be moved.

That each of you may, from this hour, make sure of such a life for himself, is my sincere wish and prayer as I bid you farewell.

## XVIII.

### *THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.\**

"IN WHOM ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE."  
— *Col. ii. 3.*

YALE COLLEGE was founded avowedly as a Christian college. All its endowments and arrangements have been inspired and controlled by the definite purpose that the education imparted here should be emphatically Christian. It is no strange thing in this country that colleges and universities should be founded upon this theory. All the older colleges were originally established in the interests of Christianity and the Church, — the Church being conceived as providing for every interest and relation of human society. Most of our recent higher institutions, with a few notable and well-known exceptions, have been founded in a similar spirit. In the older countries the same, till of late, has been emphatically true. Within a few years, however, both in the old countries and the new, another theory has found many advocates, and been embodied in a few colleges and universities. This theory, which may be called the secular as contrasted with the Christian, is briefly this:—

Education of every grade — and pre-eminently of the highest — to be consummate, must be free from all alliances with religion. It must forswear any allegiance

\* *June 27, 1886; also at Wellesley College, May 30, 1880.*

to the Christian creed, and dispense with positive Christian influences. While it may accept the fruits of Christian civilization so far as science and letters, art and culture, law and morality, have taken these into the general life, it will best do its appropriate work, and even best serve Christianity itself, if it leaves all positive Christian teaching and training to the household and the Church. I propose at this time to explain and defend the old theory as contrasted with the new, — the theory on which this college stands, and which it proposes to exemplify. I must assume, first of all, that Christianity is true as a history; that it is supernatural in its import; that it is of supreme importance to every individual man, and the human race; and that to both, Christ, in his life, his death, and his advancing kingdom is to become more a manifested necessity and a conspicuous power, till what seem the brilliant romances of prophecy shall become the sober facts of history. The man who believes all this of Christianity and of Christ would seem to be compelled to believe that in the progress of society towards this consummation, the appliances of education must inevitably be moulded more completely and confessedly by the power of Him who shall subdue all things to himself.

On the other hand, the reasoner who holds that Christianity is largely fabulous or exaggerated, and the supernatural in it is impossible, must conclude that the morning star which ushered in its dawn, must give way before the rising sun of science and culture. The man who half believes, or who even surmises that positive Christianity cannot stand before modern science and modern criticism, must conclude that Christianity ought to have little prominence in that education which will very soon permit it to have no place in scientific belief. All those who hold these views, either as misgivings or

conclusions, are thoroughly consistent in excluding Christianity from every college and university, or in providing for its gradual and decorous retreat with appropriate honors.

For these reasons, it is of prime importance that every one who discusses the question before us should, first of all, settle the question whether, and in what sense, he holds to the supremacy and permanence of Christianity. With those who deny or half believe that Christianity is supernatural and permanent we can hold no argument, for they have already decided the question at issue. We can only address ourselves to those who believe in Christianity as permanent and divine, but yet honestly question whether, in the present condition of our higher schools of learning, and of Christianity itself, it is either wise or practicable any longer to make these schools distinctively and earnestly Christian. I have spoken of my topic as a question, and the discussion of it as an argument, and it may be a criticism or a refutation of dissentient or opposing views. I do not, however, propose to make this discussion controversial, or even critical. I would rather seek to portray in positive form the ideal Christian college in its aims, and the conditions of their realization. I shall aim, however, to show, also, that this ideal ought to be made real. It is the glory of Christianity that it presents the noblest of ideals. It is none the less its glory that it inspires men with courage and self-sacrifice to turn these ideals into facts.

I observe, *first*, that the ideal Christian college should continue and supplement the functions of the family and the Church. If the family and the Church should be Christian, the college, for similar reasons, should also be Christian. Christianity presupposes the family and the Church. It finds men with a home and a temple

of some sort. It roots itself in the one, and expands itself within the other, purifying and elevating both. While it addresses man as an individual, it presupposes that he draws much of his life from his social relations. Society implies letters and laws and manners and morals; religion, that God is manifested through nature and, perhaps, in history. Society and religion presuppose schools — which can do more than home or neighborhood in teaching language and history, science and art. The Church, in its way, is also a school in which religious truth is defended, explained, and applied to the duties of this life and the hopes of the next. Had there been no patriarchs, no lawgivers, no scribes, no schools of the prophets, no synagogues, there had been no Christ, no cross, and no redemption.

The college, however, trains and teaches the young on a still higher scale than the family or the Church. If the elementary instruction of the lower should be positively Christian, why should not that of the higher? Looking at this question from a Christian standpoint, we can give but one answer: the school of the highest grade should be emphatically and positively Christian. That it should be wisely Christian need not be suggested; that it should not undo by overdoing is self-evident; but that Christian aims should animate and control its life is equally manifest. That the realization of these aims involves peculiar difficulties we do not deny; that it may call for special sagacity is very likely; that it may provoke many conflicts about reason and faith, and right and wrong in conduct and character, is not only probable, but certain. Similar difficulties occur in the family, the home, and the Church; but that Christianity should found colleges seems at first as natural and necessary, as that it should seek to animate the family and the Church with its truth and its life.

As we have already seen, the influence of the one is but a prolongation of the influence of the others. To the college student and the scholar, the story of the Gospels, that has been read in the home or heard in the church, must take its place as true or false in the long roll of general history, which every student must learn to accept or reject with some measure of instructed judgment. The speculative conceptions of God, of duty and immortality, of government, law, and religion, of the origination of the earth and the spirit of man, which the educated man must formally accept or reject, are necessarily theistic or atheistic. They must also be consistent or inconsistent with the Christian creed. The practical principles, the theories of manners and of morals, which the student more or less intelligently receives or rejects as the living springs of his own moral life, must be sharply Christian or non-Christian; or as many-shaded and as inconsistent as the hues of the chameleon, which is colored by what it chances to feed on.

We confess that we cannot understand the logic or the practical wisdom of those who admit the propriety and necessity of positive Christian influences in the home and seminary, but would omit or exclude them from the college. The reason which they give is, that the pupil is no longer a child, and, therefore, should be treated as a man. It is true that he is no longer a child, and, perhaps, not a youth; but neither in character nor in convictions has he become a man. Moreover, just at this period of life he is doomed to pass through the fermenting and transition processes, by which he must form for himself his practical convictions, and his theoretical judgments, in the light of independent thought. It may be that less can be done in a formal way for either at this time than at any other. It may be, and doubtless is, true, that officious and ill-timed



intermeddling will do more harm than good; and yet, for all that, there is no time or condition of life in which wise Christian influences are more needed or are more effective than when the spontaneous impulses of childhood and youth are confirmed or rejected by distinct acts of intelligent volition—the judgments of the growing man. The moment a youth enters a college, he finds himself in a new country. Even if the pupil lodges and eats at his own home, the public opinion of the college will yet penetrate into his chamber with its pervasive and stimulating atmosphere. This is trebly true if his own home is exchanged for a home within the college, charged, as this always is, with the electric force of young and buoyant life. It may be that often the teacher is impotent to use any direct moral or religious influence. We know very well that he may often overdo by ill-timed zeal and injudicious obtrusiveness; and that, in contrast with misdirected speech, silence is indeed golden. We know, as well, that if the teacher's own character is elevated and refined by Christian earnestness, a single word or sentiment that breaks this golden silence will go further to confirm the halting faith or to rekindle the smouldering fervor than a sermon from any preacher or a homily from any exhorter; or, unhappily, a contemptuous word or sarcastic utterance may rend the feeble fabric of a failing faith, and poison the heart with distrust or scorn of what is noble and good. The teacher who is worthy of the name can reach the inner life of his pupil by what he says and does, as no other person can. He can strengthen and renew the springs of that life, sometimes, by a look or a word, just as it takes the second adjustment which shall be final.

This is not all. During his college and university life, the pupil must at least begin the critical revisal of his

religious and philosophical creed in the light of all that science and history and philosophy and criticism can say in their latest discoveries and reports. To the searching brightness of these blazing lights, the pupil must bring all that he had hitherto received without question. Into this fusing crucible he must cast all his traditional faiths, to receive them back as they shall leap forth in purer metal and brighter lustre, or to reject them as worthless dross or base alloy. He cannot save these faiths from this fiery trial, though rooted in the convictions of his father, and hallowed by the love and prayers of his mother, and made sacred by the aspirations and vows of his youth. He ought not to desire to do so. It is better that they should be reviewed and revised by the light of his maturing judgment.

To withdraw them from this light would dwarf his intellect and enfeeble his convictions. It would open a widening and deepening chasm between his practical and intellectual life. It would dishonor the truth, which will not submit to be divided. This process of adjustment must and ought to go on. While it is proceeding, the college or university becomes, of necessity, the church; and the teachers and associates are, for the time being, priests and oracles; for it is in the light of what these attest and prove that the old creed is re-affirmed or questioned or renounced. And what if this church has no religion, and the priests have no consecration? What, again, if they are thoroughly and unaffectedly Christian? In these times of crisis—and they are always present—a word or look from the living teacher, a chance remark in the one direction on the other, an earnest and candid spirit, or a scoffing and dogmatic doubt, or the combined impression of his intellectual temper and personal spirit, have, in thousands of in-

stances, been fraught with bane or blessing to his confiding pupil. Of many, in this crisis of their spiritual history, it might be said, that so far as human counsel and help can come at all in this critical and transition period, they must come through those intellectual activities which are the absorbing and controlling element of the student's life.

*Second*, Christianity needs the college to improve its own spiritual quality, and enlarge its attractiveness and power. For this reason the Christian college is an essential appendage to the Church, and, therefore, ought to be emphatically Christian. It is now more generally conceded than formerly that education and culture are essential to furnish armor for the defence of the Church, and weapons for its advancement. It is not so clearly recognized as it ought to be, that both are required for the development of its own varied and highest perfections. While it is granted by all that a certain measure of each is required for the existence and growth of the kingdom of God, it is, at the same time, feared by many that too much of either will bring hindrance rather than help to the strength and beauty of the Christian character. We hold the contrary. Knowledge does, indeed, bring its temptations as truly as ignorance. Culture may hinder Christ-likeness as certainly as squalor; but knowledge and culture, in their highest perfection, are needed for the complete manifestation of what Christianity can do for man. We say nothing here for the moral and spiritual conditions of the Christian life. We concede and contend that these are indispensable; that it is only the docile child, whether he be a peasant or a philosopher, who can enter — much more who is the greatest in — the kingdom of heaven. But we also know that the import of the kingdom of heaven, in its inner spirit and its external manifesta-

tions, can only be comprehended in its full significance by the most enlarged and best instructed mind, or appreciated by the most refined and cultured soul. This ideal will never be perfectly understood and exemplified until the results of science and culture shall have been applied to all the forms of individual morals and manners, and in all those agencies which Christian ethics and social science shall mature and put in force. To such a consummation the Christian college is as necessary as Christian preaching; the University, as the Sunday School; the conscientious culture of science, literature, and art, as the prayer-meeting and the Bible-reader. It will not be till every thought is subjected to the obedience of Christ, that the tabernacle of God shall, indeed, be with men. The author of the work entitled "*Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism*," betrays by its title his own narrow and squalid conceptions of the kingdom of God. The book is as vulgar and narrow as its title is unchristian, and never could have been conceived or respected except in a low condition of Christian enlightenment.

How sorely our practical Christianity needs to be elevated above such narrow and vulgar conceptions of many of its advocates and representatives, one hardly need suggest. We are forced to confess that, with all that is noble and Christian-like in its spirit, much remains that is hateful in its manners and its morals. See the Church forgetting that it should be militant only against its foes, and behaving itself so often like a termagant in the houses of its friends! Think of the sectarianism which is its scandal and shame, of which every village, from the oldest to the newest, gives visible tokens in its rival houses of worship, that also betoken the hateful jealousies of their adherents! Think, also, of its hard and scholastic statements of doctrine; of its

narrow judgments of character ; of its scrimping parsimony in some directions, and criminal luxury in others ; of the tenacity with which it adheres to old errors, and the credulity with which it runs after the last sensationalism ! And all this while how heedless is it of the pure and spiritual example of the patient Christ, who can only say, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are." Meanwhile the plaintive cry of distress now and then rises into the shriek of alarm, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" And, worst of all, in high places and low, in the lanes and avenues of the cities, in the streets and lurking-places of the villages, glaring frauds and brutal crime suggest the question, "Has conscience, too, with faith in God, left the soul of man?"

Do you ask, What might Christian culture do for our individual and public morals and economics were it rightly enforced in our colleges, and spread from them through our social life? We reply, it should give us correct and worthy conceptions of Christianity as an historic phenomenon. It should so effectually arouse the historic sense, and quicken the historic imagination, that, among all the heroes of the earth, Christ should be visibly transfigured, high and lifted up ; and not only Moses and Elias should be there with Peter, James, and John, but Gautama and Plato and Marcus Aurelius should also bow with wonder and worship, and say, "It is good for us to be here." This historic Christ, being seen in his true place and correct proportions, would be worshipped as the supernatural Christ, for the reason that the philosophy to which Christian culture and science would attain, would recognize a personal and living God as a speculative necessity ; and such a theism would find no contradiction between his immanent direction of those laws of nature which he conserves, and

those manifestations of his presence which flash forth when he breaks the circuit and makes himself felt in creation or miracle, or in the gentler methods of that providence which answers trust and prayer. Such a theory of history and of God would find it easy to accept the historic Christ, when seen, in the light of his finished work, to be none other than God manifest in the flesh. Such a manifestation would necessarily suppose some need which it was designed to meet, and some import which fully meets it. Such a statement of need and import involves a creed which will be more or less sharp according to the capacity of men to distinguish and define, and more or less varied and flexible according to the changes of philosophy and language. In this way an enlightened Christianity would be a doctrinal, because it is a rational, Christianity, and must connect its Christian truths with those underlying principles with which humane speculation has always concerned itself. But it would not be rationalistic in the offensive sense of the term, because it is too enlightened not to recognize the limits of human logic, and the authority of testimony and faith, especially when personality and the supernatural are concerned. It would not and could not be dogmatic, however, in the scholastic sense, for it could not fail to remember that the chief value of doctrine is to reveal and emphasize the personal Christ, and that abstract formulæ take feeble hold of the feelings and the life.

But all the studies of the enlightened scholar would enforce the one truth, that Christianity is a great, practical power, and that in this lies its chief interest in the past and for the future. In the light of this absorbing and overwhelming relation, he finds little interest in it as a subject of curious and critical detail, or of metaphysical, hair-splitting, and fiery controversy. He cares

for it most of all because it is destined for use; and inquires how its energies may be largely increased, and its capacities may be most successfully applied. Hence, an intelligent and instructed Christianity must be evangelistic and missionary in its spirit. It cannot but go out into the highways and hedges: it must devise missions of all sorts to the poor and neglected at home — to the idolatrous and superstitious across the seas. There prevails, at present, a strong tendency to believe that success in evangelistic work is reserved for men of limited reading and narrow associations, because their hearts and minds are supposed to be nearest to those of the people. Facts by no means justify this conclusion. Christian history testifies most abundantly that evangelistic and missionary zeal have been kindled and renewed nowhere so constantly as in Christian colleges; and that men trained in the universities have found a most efficient preparation in classical and scientific study for using plain speech and popular illustrations with the greatest effect among both pagan and Christian heathens. The annals of English and American colleges abound with the names of men — some of the brightest — who have been thus distinguished. Many a thoughtful scholar, while studying the history of the Church and meditating on the needs of men, has heard the question addressed to himself, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” and has responded, with trembling yet confident voice, “Here am I: send me.” An instructed Christianity cannot but be practical; and a practical Christianity must be evangelistic and missionary in its spirit.

An instructed Christianity must also be catholic and unsectarian. The Christian college, almost of necessity, trains its pupils to enlarged and liberal views of things non-essential, and to a catholic appreciation of things

that are common. Narrowness of views tends to the exaggeration of things that are less important, and the overvaluation of limited interests. As the student follows the great movements of the hosts of God's chosen in the past, their minor subdivisions are lost sight of in the movements of the mass; their variously colored banners seem to blend into one cloud of prismatic light; while the separate watchword of each division swells into one harmonious war-cry of courage and victory. Under the enlightened judgment which a liberal training fosters, an uncatholic spirit is impossible. It does not suffice to assert that some colleges which have called themselves Christian have been the last hiding-places of bigotry, and the inveterate nurseries of sectarianism. Such institutions are not usually eminently Christian, or eminent for liberal science or culture.

For the future application of Christianity to public and private economics, — that department which must soon be occupied, and ought to be directed, by the Christian Church, — we must look to the highest schools of learning for the improvement of the aims and quality of our Christian activity. These schools should be the first to call the attention of the community to its duties and opportunities in every sphere of political and social life. An atheistic sociology may go before us with its narrower vision and its emphatic affirmations of those conclusions which experience has established, but as it will do scant justice to the higher elements in human nature, and can recognize no beneficent Providence, its theories must of necessity be untrustworthy if not erroneous. In motives to action and hope, it cannot compare with the system which believes in a future kingdom of God that shall be built up under the guidance of an Almighty power, and shall be neither more nor less than a human society transformed by means



of social agencies into a tabernacle, in which God shall indeed dwell with men, and wipe away all tears from all eyes.

But again, *Thirdly*, the college should be Christian, in order to elevate and improve the quality of our science and culture. We have seen that Christianity owes much to both. We proceed to show that both owe much to Christianity. Christianity — i. e. Christian education — enlarges and elevates science, while it inspires and refines culture. We are so accustomed to talk of science and culture as separate agencies, that we forget that they only represent the theories and convictions, the aspirations and imaginative power, of living men. We insensibly conceive of them as natural agents or cosmic forces acting under impersonal laws. The very current use of such phrases as the time-spirit, the laws of progress, evolution and development, tends to deepen this impression. The necessary narrowness of all scientific thinking, which is occasioned by the limitations of the activity of a single individual and a single age, together with the unchanging nature of the laws under which men classify and reason, confirm these habits of thought. The new theories of materialistic and metaphysical development, which sink the individual soul into a metaphysical formula, carry with them the conclusion that science and culture have a self-moving force which is independent of personal activity or emotion, and, consequently, incompatible with religious belief or inspiration. The actual history of science and culture is a refutation of these conceptions. Both are the workmanship of living men, the joint products of their individual freedom, and of the education and opportunities of the men who went before and who lived with them. The result is, truth and beauty as reflected in individual minds, and accepted by the con-

senting and approving generations of individual souls. But what each individual soul shall be is determined, very largely, by his religious creed and aspirations. A few examples may suffice to show what we mean, and to confirm its truth. The speculative thinking of modern times is represented by such names as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibnitz, Hume, Rousseau, Reid, Adam Smith, Kant, Schelling, Hamilton, Hegel, Comte, Mill, and Spencer. Modern physics is represented by Newton, Brewster, Young, Davy, Faraday, Tyndall, Helmholtz, Herschell, Kirchhoff, and a multitude more. Modern culture, by a still greater host; such as Cowper, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Goethe, Schiller, Tennyson, Macaulay, Carlyle, Emerson, and Matthew Arnold. In speculative philosophy — which would seem to be most withdrawn from personal influences — nothing is more obvious than that the personal faith of each leader of thought has been a potent factor in determining the range of the philosophical relations which he recognized, and the relative place which he assigned them in his system. The mystical scepticism of Kant, the semi-Christian pantheism of Schleiermacher, the decorous conformity of Locke, the keen pyrrhonism of Hume, and the confident and imposing agnosticism of Spencer, reveal quite as much of the individual personality of each of these men as of any plastic energy in their environment. Of the physics of modern times we may say, truly, that they have been formed very largely by the pervading influence of that monotheism — that Christian doctrine of a living and personal God — which Christianity has made the faith of Europe. We might show, also, that aside from logic and mathematics, — which were the gifts of ancient thought, — our modern metaphysics and physics, our physiology and psychology, our ethics and politics, our jurisprudence and our social

science, are the products of Christian faith and of Christian ideas. When we turn to literature, we need only ask the question, Where were our Dante and Milton, our Spenser and Shakspeare, our Scott and Coleridge, our Goethe and Schiller, our Tennyson and George Eliot, had there been no personal faith in the story of the supernatural Christ, and no kindling and inexhausted pathos in his life and death? More than this is true: we fearlessly assert that in every Christian nation, in connection with every great advance in science and letters in modern life, and generally preceding it, there has been an awakening of religious faith, and a revival of spiritual fervor; and that every such excitement has given the nation and generation a new and more ardent intellectual life. We know from our own observation and in our own time, that the moment when Christian truth takes a strong hold of any gifted soul, it invariably gives to what men call genius unwonted energy of imagination and emotional power. Not unfrequently it works like inspiration in a soul reputed narrow and dull, it so increases the range and strength of its thinking, and kindles such new aspirations! Let but the breath of God at any time move a college of gifted youth to the beginnings or renewal of the Christian life, — especially if the community had been abandoned to atheistic dearth, or epicurean frivolity, or selfish culture, — and it will reveal an intellectual energy that was before unthought of. We do not say that Christianity can of itself create or inspire genius, — though, in some cases, it has almost seemed to do this, — but we do say that, other things being equal, it has enormous resources of creative energy, and that for quickening power nothing can take its place. We assert, also, that the atheistic tendencies of modern science, and the frivolous but decorous temper of our modern culture,

would effectually dry into barrenness and comparative impotence the youth of any college in which they should rule, were it not for the counteracting influence of the healthier faith of the community without.

This leads us to observe, *Fourth*, that a vigorous Christianity is required in our colleges and universities to counteract and overcome evil tendencies which are active in the science and culture of our time. These tendencies are the natural outgrowth of science and culture, when pursued for selfish ends, and uncontrolled by the higher aims of a religious love to man. Science stimulates and rewards the love of power. It tasks individual effort, and rewards it with the joy of interpreting Nature's secrets, of understanding her laws and imitating her skill. So long as Science recognizes these powers and laws as the thoughts and actings of God, so long does she open the gateway to worship and faith. So long as her devotee is trained to the docility of a little child, it is almost the same whether he knocks at the door of the hall of science, or at the door of the kingdom of heaven. But so soon as the investigator begins to imagine himself to be the creator, the interpretations of the scientist are mistaken for the plan which was devised and the agent which executes. So soon as the development of the plan sets aside both thinker and actor, then emerges the scientific Titanism of our day, which dethrones the living God in the name of that philosophy or that faith in which all science stands.

Modern culture exalts to the highest place that which was designed to be the attractive servitor of duty and self-sacrifice. Culture in art, in manners, and letters has, in the progress of comfort, wealth, and ease, become to many the chief aim of existence and the final standard of worth. So soon as it usurps this highest place with an individual, a clique, or community, it becomes a reli-

gion, — a religion that is false and idolatrous while it excludes the living God, and disdains the self-sacrificing and man-loving Christ; a religion which tests and measures the aims of life, the movements of society, and all individual and social achievements by such fastidious and limited standards as satisfy neither the nobler capacities of man nor the severer judgment of God.

It can be no secret to the observer of our times, that these antichristian tendencies are no idle fancies, but potent and formidable facts. It is equally clear that the arena which is most favorable for their successful manifestation would be a college or university which should be cleared of all religious and ethical restraints. On such a field would present themselves, in the fairest forms, the most insidious temptations that can assail the noblest minds — the love of knowledge combined with, and disguised as, the love of power — ennobled by the aspirations of duty, and dignified by the associations of competition with splendid and able rivals. Here, too, culture would display her fascinations, — confessed to be divine, if any thing human can be, — lifting man above sensual and sordid gratifications, and needing neither justification nor palliation with the heart which can be touched by beauty or grace. Culture in letters and speech and art also allies itself to science; and both exact leisure and freedom from sordid cares, while they promise to engross and satisfy the heart and life. Where else can there be so much needed a diviner power than either, as in this very home of science and culture? Who can exert that power if it be not the Christ who has been honored by so many generations of Christian scholars, as they not only stand full high advanced, as inferior to none in science and letters, but are lustrous with that peculiar grace which is known as Christian, — an epithet which suggests more than it defines?

*Fifth*, Truth compels us to add, in conclusion, that Christianity must control the college in order to exclude its antagonist, or rival, in the form of some false religion. In the present state of speculation, a university, so far as it is not positively Christian, tends towards atheism or agnosticism. One or two generations ago a college might more consistently and safely than now dispense with religious truth and influence by simply leaving alone all questions of faith. If this were possible in other days, it is impossible now. The sciences of nature—from the molecular physics which discusses the mysterious *semina rerum*, up to those fascinating departments of natural history which seem at first to appeal only to wonder and delight—are no longer content to leave theology alone. They must now discuss questions and proffer theories which force their disciples to propose the great questions of theism, and to answer them by *Yes* or *No*. History and criticism challenge the student, at every turn, to think and say whether historical and supernatural Christianity can any longer be accepted by the reader who is abreast with the time-spirit. Ethics, politics, and social science suppose a decisive position to be taken one side or the other in respect to both theism and Christianity; even elementary treatises on these subjects teach a positive faith or as positive a denial. Each of these faiths has its cultus,—the cultus of humane and reverent sympathy with the great mass of men in Christendom who, after some sort, have trusted and hoped in the living God; or the cultus of the polished Pharisee, who plants himself at the corners of the streets, and gazes at the church-going crowd, as he looks, if he does not speak, the prayer, “O Lord! I thank thee that I am not as other men are.”

We repeat that atheism and agnosticism are religious

creeds as truly as are theism and dogmatic Christianity. Either can be taught directly or indirectly ; directly, by formal and open inculcation, which, in either case, may defeat itself ; or indirectly, by gentle or sarcastic insinuation. The one or the other can be imparted in subtle ways of impression, even by an instructor who may honestly strive to withhold the slightest suggestion of his faith or his feelings. Each of these faiths, in the germ or ripened fruit, has a larger or smaller representation among pupils and teachers in every considerable college in this land. Holding, as we do, that positive Christianity is intellectually more philosophical, and morally more attractive, than either atheism or agnosticism, we willingly accept the obligation to teach the better of these religions as earnestly and as legitimately as we may.

As we have thus far conceived of the Christian college in the ideal, let us, for a moment, imagine one that had become thoroughly unchristian or antichristian, and follow out the inner and outer life of such an isolated and self-contained community of pupils, especially when separated from their homes. Such a college would have no place of common worship. The place where a chapel once stood has become vacant ; or, if the edifice remains, over its portal is written, "To us there is no God, the Father of spirits, and no Christ by whom we know him ;" or, perhaps, there is emblazoned the inscription that describes the object to which the so-called piety of science offers its dazed and complacent worship, "To the unknown and the unknowable." Nor prayer nor anthem is ever heard within these enclosures that are consecrated, with an anchorite's rigor, to the severe austerities of a narrow intellectual insight, and of a culture to which no sin is mortal, except it offends against decorum. In the studies of such an institution, the

fundamental unities which science presupposes must all be passed over, lest, forsooth, they should raise questions concerning God, and require answers that savor of positive religion. The philosophic range of such an institution must be narrow, whether it forbids us to speculate about God, or whether it dogmatizes that only women and priests accept a God who thinks and cares for men. Whether theism or agnosticism is the prevalent creed that is secretly cherished, each is held on narrow grounds; for theological declarations are not tolerated, except in the form of imaginative flights that are admired for their suggestive imagery, or of orphic utterances that fit well to music. Psychology would naturally sink into physiology, because spirit, as usually conceived, would make God rational and even necessary, and would also provide for responsibility and immortality. Moreover, spirit has of late been pronounced by all scientific men whose opinions are worth considering, to be but a function of matter; and ethics, politics, and social science are now best explained as the successive growths of that omnipresent and all-producing mechanism which, under the name of development, has not yet been branded with the title of a theological theory.

To appeal in defence or enforcement of any truth concerning God or immortality to the hopes and desires, to the aspirations and longings of the heart, or to the guilt and fears of the conscience, is to commit the sin of sentimentalism, which the intellectual tone of this house of spiritual death will never pardon.

Thank God, there is no such college in this land, because the people in this land do not desire such a one for their children. Even in those institutions upon which state necessity imposes narrow restrictions, or in which a secular theory strives to be logical, the Christian convictions of the people require that in some form or other



there shall be a more or less positive recognition of God and duty and immortality — both the teaching of these verities as solid and trustworthy on scientific grounds, and the practical response to them in some services of Christian worship.

We are well aware that all our arguments and representations will be confronted with this comprehensive reply: "The ideal which you describe and defend cannot be made real. However desirable it may be to combine in the same society an ardent zeal for science and culture with fervent religious activities and aspirations, these elements are incompatible, or, at least, they cannot be provided for in the theory and practice of a numerous and richly provided college or university, such as our modern life imperatively demands. Your ideal, and the reasons which impel to its realization, are against the tendencies of modern thought. The drift of modern practice, as founded on modern experience, and determined by the more complicated character of modern life, tends to narrow the sphere of Christian influences in the formal teaching and public arrangements of our leading colleges, and to make their internal spirit more positively secular and simply intellectual." That this tendency is inevitable, and that the drift cannot be resisted, is argued from the following reasons:—

1. The spirit of the age requires that our investigations should be unbiased and untrammelled by any traditional creeds. Whenever Christian doctrines or religious interests are prominently considered, investigation cannot be absolutely free. The fancied tendency of a theory or conclusion must always limit the freedom of thought, and disturb the coolness of the judgment. Science can only thrive when one passion is supreme, and that passion is devotion to the truth. Religious traditions and prejudices, whether amiable or virulent,

are inconsistent with, or hostile to, this devotion. It is for this reason that science thrusts them aside, and even drives them out from the arena within which thought alone achieves its conquests.

To which we reply, The love of truth is then acknowledged to be the supreme duty. Science then appeals to the conscience for help; and conscience is a religion of itself, or supposes a religion which enforces its behests. To the supremacy of duty many interests and desires are opposed. The Christian faith is properly defined as the living belief of Christian truth, because it is true. Moreover, similar passions hinder the acceptance of scientific and Christian truth, — as the love of tradition, the pride of opinion, a received watchword, the name of a party or a school. The great leader of the Christian Church declared, "To this end was I born, and to this end came I forth, that I might bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." In theory, then, there is no conflict between the two impulses. Lord Bacon had the insight and magnanimity to declare that a man must become as docile as a child if he would enter either the kingdom of science or the kingdom of heaven.

We do not affirm that all Christian scientists and Christian universities are wholly faithful to this spirit in their search after either religious or scientific truth. We are quite confident that all scientists are not. But this we do affirm, that a Christian college is neither very enlightened nor very Christian which does not found its teachings on evidence; which does not give reasons for its opinions; which does not challenge the opponents of its scientific or religious creed to open combat on the grounds of reason; and which does not enjoin upon its students the duty fearlessly to search for truth of every sort in the fear and love of God. Those

who speak so contemptuously of theologians as the necessary and natural antagonists of free inquiry and scientific progress, and argue that Christian earnestness in a college or university must necessarily hinder freedom of thought, do great dishonor to the multitude of Christian believers, among the dead and the living, whose scientific researches have been of the freest and the ablest, and for the reason that they have been conducted in a conscientious spirit under the eye of the living God. Prominent among men of this sort was the late Dr. Alexander Duff, who was as distinguished for missionary zeal as he was for the use he made of Christian institutions of learning in the propagation of Christianity in India. The splendid success which attended the Christian seminary which he opened at Calcutta, as contrasted with the secular schools of the government, in respect to both educational and religious results, is an instructive example of the educational power which Christianity possesses, and of which our American pagans might well take heed. I refer to him here as a fearless lover of truth of all sorts, and quote the words of the eminent lawyer and publicist, Sir Henry Maine: "Next I was struck—and here we have the point of contact between Dr. Duff's religious and educational life—by his perfect faith in the harmony of truth. I am not aware that he ever desired the university to refuse instruction in any subject of knowledge because he considered it dangerous. When men of feeble minds or weaker faith would have shrunk from encouraging the study of this or that classical language because it enshrined the doctrines of some antique superstition, or would have refused to stimulate proficiency in this or that walk of physical science because its conclusions were supposed to lead to irreligious consequences, Dr. Duff, believing his own creed to be true,

believed, also, that it had the great characteristic of truth, — that characteristic which nothing else except truth possesses, — that it can be reconciled with every thing else which is also true."

The sectarian spirit in theology and religion we know is sometimes fearfully narrowing, and most hostile to true enlightenment and progress. The same is true of the sectarian spirit in science, when it blinds the mind to either facts or arguments when they make against a favorite theory or school. The feuds and jealousies of science extend to both principles and men: they control universities as truly as individuals. For this reason, motives higher than the purely intellectual are not only useful, but often greatly needed, even in schools of pure science. So far as Christian motives are concerned, we assert with confidence that of any score or hundred of seekers after scientific truth, those who are devoutly theistic or Christian in their faith are by far the most likely to be fearless and open-minded in receiving and asserting whatever is new, provided it be true. For a Christian believer to insinuate the opposite is to confess the narrowness of his own conceptions of Christianity, or to question the liberality of those of his neighbor.

2. It may still be argued, that in the present divided state of Christendom a college which is positively Christian must, in fact, be controlled by some religious denomination, and this must necessarily narrow and belittle its intellectual and emotional life. We reply, a college need not be administered in the interests of any religious sect, even if it be controlled by it. We have contended, at length, that science and culture tend to liberalize sectarian narrowness. We know that Christian philosophy, history, and literature are eminently catholic and liberal. No class of men so

profoundly regret the divisions of Christendom as do Christian scholars; and, we add, their liberality is often in proportion to their fervor. While a college may be, and sometimes is, a nursery of petty prejudices, and a hiding-place for sectarian bigotry, it is untrue to all the lessons of Christian thoughtfulness if it fails to honor its own nobler charity, and will sooner or later outgrow its narrowness.

3. It may be still further urged, that a Christian college must limit itself in the selection of instructors to men of positive Christian belief, and may thus deprive itself of the ablest instruction. We reply, no positive inferences of this sort can be drawn from the nature or duties of a Christian college. The details of administration are always controlled by wise discretion. A seeker after God, if he has not found rest in faith, may be even more devout and believing in his influence than a fiery dogmatist or an uncompromising polemic. And yet it may be true, that a teacher who is careless of misleading confiding youth, and who is fertile in suggestions of unbelief, may, for this reason and this only, be disqualified from being a safe and useful instructor in any college, whether Christian or secular. Personal characteristics very properly enter very largely into a just estimate of the requisites for an ennobling and successful instructor; and among personal qualities, those which we call Christian are esteemed the most ennobling, except by those who are ashamed of the Christian name.

Last of all, it may be urged that a Christian college may become the nursery of pietistic sentimentalism or fanatical fervor. This is true; but there are other sentimentalisms than those which are inspired by Christian truth and the Christian history, and there are other fanaticisms than such as flame in the Christian Church.

The best security against all excesses of this sort is to be found in that soundness of mind which earnest Christian devotion is fitted to inspire, when instructed by solid learning, and enlightened by science; when refined by imaginative literature, and made graceful by consummate art.

We conclude as we began,—that a Christian college, to be worthy of its name, must be the home of enlarged knowledge and varied culture. It must abound in all the appliances of research and instruction; its libraries and collections must be rich to affluence; its corps of instructors must be well trained and enthusiastic in the work of teaching. For all this, money is needed; and it should be gathered into great centres,—not wasted in scanty fountains, nor subdivided into insignificant rills. Into such a temple of science the Christian spirit should enter as the shechinah of old, purifying and consecrating all to itself. In such a college the piety should inspire the science, and the culture should elevate and refine the piety, and the two should lift each the other upward toward God, and speed each other outward and onward in errands of blessing to man.

Whether a Christian college shall surpass one that is purely or chiefly secular in its scientific training and literary culture, must be tested by time; but, in order that the test should be fair, the advantages must be equal. The endowments, the appliances, the libraries, the museums, and all else that wealth can furnish, must be similar in attractiveness and solidity. The friends of each must give to each an enthusiastic and unwavering support. We do not contend that religious zeal can be a substitute for scientific ardor, but we do argue that it may and will furnish the highest aspiration when directed to scientific studies. We are not so simple as to hold that the culture of the religious feelings is a

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substitute for the training of the imagination; but we do contend that the imagination, when fired by Christian faith and fervor, rises to its loftiest achievements. In a word, we believe that the Christian faith is the perfection of the human reason, as truly as a necessity to the human heart, and is, therefore, essential to the highest forms of human culture.

We conclude that no institution of higher education can attain the highest ideal excellence, in which the Christian faith is not exalted as supreme; in which its truth is not asserted with a constant fidelity, defended with unrelenting ardor, and enforced with a fervent and devoted zeal; in which Christ is not honored as the inspirer of man's best affections, the model of man's highest excellence, and the master of all human duties. Let two instructions be placed side by side, with equal advantages in other particulars; let the one be positively Christian, and the other consistently secular,—and the Christian will assuredly surpass the secular in the contributions which it will make to science and culture, and in the men which it will train for the service of their kind.

*Young Gentlemen of the Graduating Class,*—The solemnity which brings you here attests the fact that this is a Christian college. The routine of our daily worship, the services to which you are called on Sunday, and many other provisions for religious culture, all affirm that we hold and teach the Christian faith as true and divine, as supreme in its importance for this life and the future. The fact that science and learning and culture occupy our chief attention, and meet us with their daily and earnest demands, does in no sense indicate that we esteem Christian truth of less practical importance, to control our ambitions, to repress our pas-

sions, to soften and subdue, to elevate and refine, our human nature. For we are none the less men, because we are students, with human hearts that thirst continually for God, for the living God. But the fact that we are students lays upon us the additional obligation to try our faith by the light of reason, and to justify and shape our devotion by the tests of culture. If we think as philosophers, we must ask and answer the question whether philosophy of necessity accepts or denies the living and personal God. If we answer this question in the negative, we must sadly and sorrowfully turn our faces to the wall, blank and chilling though it may be, which shuts the living God forever out of our sight, and on which we write in vain some meaningless formulas, or paint a few brilliant pictures. If we answer yes, we rejoice as none but the believing philosopher can, in the ten thousand voices in which he hears the universe of law and order re-echo the praises of the Father of spirits. If we question whether God is a loving and holy person, — and all students must ask this question in the light of reflective thought, — the answer which we accept will either drive us to mute despair, or call forth the response of our heartfelt joy. If we look back upon the past in the light of history, or forward to the future with the confidence of prophecy, and find in the past or future no God, we must either find in the past and future a maze which we cannot master, or apply to both some hollow abstraction that will have its brief day in the schools, and then give way to another. If we resort to culture, and worship literature and the imagination, we shall find that poetry and criticism and art, in which the conscience and duty, and love and self-sacrifice, are not living factors, will either wither into emptiness and frivolity, or rot in the corruption of base and sensual passion, or be hardened into the pessimism of sullen despair.



Most of all is the scholar of the present day vexed with the great historical questions which gather about the personal Christ, — questions which no student of the present day can think of setting aside, but the answers to which must disappoint or satisfy, as he accepts or doubts or denies the most glorious of facts, if it be a fact, or the most imposing and disappointing of fictions, if it be a fiction. This greatest of questions in many of its aspects is one which learned criticism and profound philosophy can alone decide, but which is destined sooner or later to interest most profoundly the minds of thinking men. If the colleges that exist do not concern themselves with these questions, and the men who teach and study do not undertake to answer them, then we may be assured that other colleges will be raised that will; for the earnest men of this generation will find out whether science will succeed in dethroning God, the living God, and whether criticism shall mock and crucify Christ anew.

Then, too, these practical questions which men of education must confront as soon as they cross the threshold of the schools, and which nowadays occupy so much attention in the schools, the questions which threaten to agitate and convulse society, will very soon force every educated man to ask and to answer the more comprehensive inquiry, — Is there, or is there not, a kingdom of God slowly but surely lifting itself up in the sight of the nations, or is it only a kingdom of science, a kingdom of fate and force, that has no promise for the poor, no comfort for the sorrowing, and no justice for the wronged, no deliverance for the oppressed, or at the utmost nothing more than a blind tendency of progress toward some brilliant mirage that eternally flees before the disappointed vision?

Sooner or later political science will discover, if it is

not beginning to be aware, that it can neither state its problems correctly, nor solve them satisfactorily, without recognizing man as a moral and spiritual being, and man's relations to God and duty and faith.

But while the defenders of Christian verity should be aggressive and earnest, they also need to learn how to be patient and tolerant and catholic. They best know the difficulties of faith, for many of them have trodden the long and devious ways in which many thinking men must often prosecute their search after God. They can best appreciate and overcome the misgivings of science, the questionings of history, the suggestions of criticism, the rebellions of the imagination, and the offences of culture.

They are slow to exalt scientific theories into theological creeds, and quick to exercise the largest charity for the men whose theories they reject. They regard freedom of thought as the condition of scientific progress and of religious honesty, and sometimes wait long for the convictions which they hope for, but for which they never cease to hope.

But college life is not a discipline for the intellect only. It is also eminently social and personal. It tests religious professions with unsparing scrutiny. It sees through hypocrisy, it detests cant, it is repelled by overmuch religiousness, but it honors earnest and consistent faith whenever it is sweet and reasonable and manly. There is no place where a genuine Christian life tells for so much as in a community like this, for there is no place where wholesome impressions of character are so vivid and so permanent. That is a short-sighted view of Christian influences in college which limits them to the four years of the college residence, when it so often happens that they are fresh and vivid after forty years are gone, and when we hear of so many of our

graduates who come into a settled Christian faith after they leave their college home, and in so many cases as the result of influences and impressions received within these walls. That Christian excellence is honored here, whenever it inspires genuine human excellence, and is worthily represented in a noble and earnest manhood, you will all bear witness, as to-day you think so tenderly of the classmate whom you buried last Christmas, but whom you will never forget to honor and mourn. Let his faith be yours, let his purposes be yours, let his expectations for usefulness and honor be yours. Let the beauty of his life be a constant argument for the truth and the power of the Christian faith, and a perpetual inspiration to a fruitful Christian life. So shall your college life be a preparation and an anticipation for the life which is immortal.

With these wishes and prayers, I bid you farewell.







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